

The Saints and Servants of God.

SECOND SERIES

THE LIFE

OF

S. BERNARDINE OF SIENA,

MINOR OBSERVANTINE.

"Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in
universo mundo."—*Antiph. Ecclesiæ.*



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HENRICUS E., *Archiep. Westmonast.*

TO
THE SECULAR CLERGY
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND,
THE SUCCESSORS AND SPIRITUAL CHILDREN
OF GENERATIONS OF MARTYRS,
WHO,
BY THEIR CHEERFULNESS IN HOLY POVERTY,
THEIR DILIGENCE
IN OBSCURITY AND UNDER OPPRESSION,
THEIR UNEXAMPLED CONFIDENCE
IN THE TRUTHS THEY TAUGHT,
THEIR FORGIVING CHARITY
TOWARDS UNGENEROUS OPPONENTS,
AND THEIR SELF-DENYING KINDNESS TOWARDS THOSE
WHOM THEIR PRAYERS, THEIR SACRIFICES,
AND THEIR SUFFERINGS
RESCUED FROM THE DARKNESS OF ERROR,
HAVE PRESERVED TO THEIR COUNTRY,
TOGETHER WITH THE PRECIOUS EXAMPLE
OF THEIR OWN VIRTUES,
THE UNFAILING LIGHT
OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH,
AND THE HEREDITARY DEVOTION TO THE HOLY SEE,
WHICH DISTINGUISHED
THE PILGRIMS AND SAINTS OF SAXON TIMES,
AND THE PRINCELY BUILDERS
OF OUR NORMAN CHURCHES.

S. WILFRID'S.

TRANSLATION OF S. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

MDCCCXLVII.

WE hereby approve and sanction the Series of Lives of the Canonized and Beatified Saints, the Servants of God declared Venerable, and others commonly reputed to have died in the odour of sanctity, now in course of publication by the Congregation of the Oratory of S. Philip Neri; and we cordially recommend it to the Faithful, as calculated to promote the glory of God and of His Saints, the increase of devotion, and the spread of our holy Religion.

Given at Westminster, the Feast of the Nativity
of our B. Lady, A.D. 1851.

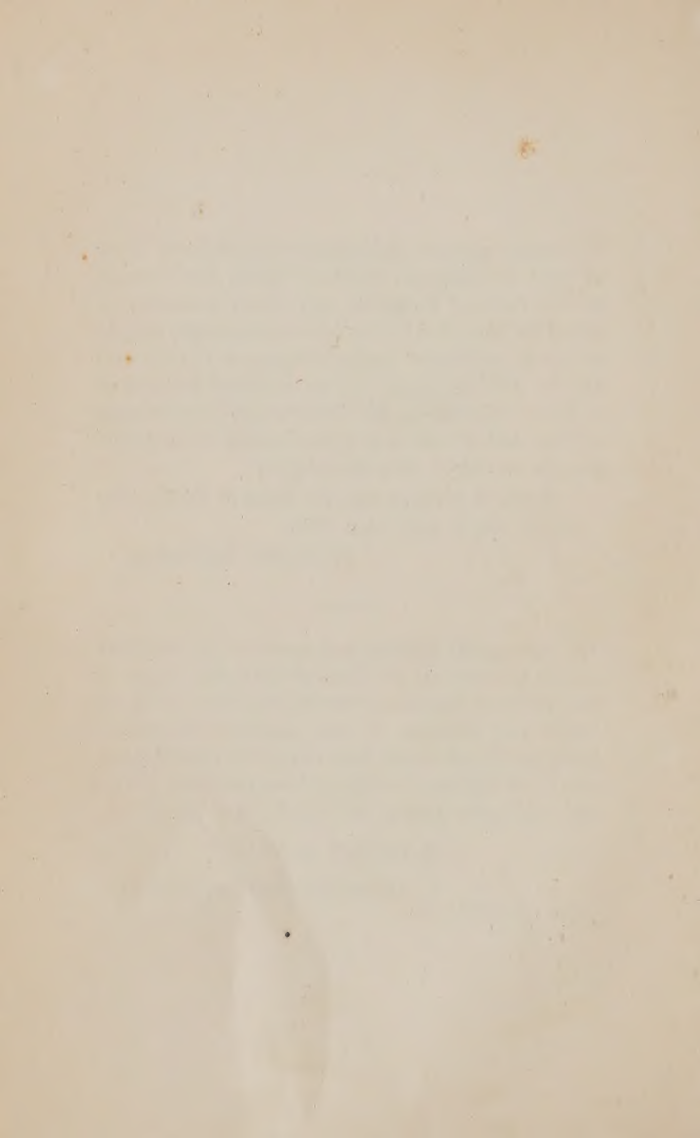
N. CARD. WISEMAN.

WE very gladly approve and sanction the continuation of the Series of the Lives of the Saints, begun by the Reverend Fathers of the Oratory, with the approbation and sanction of our lamented Predecessor, being deeply convinced that, in the last twenty years, the Lives hitherto published have promoted a deep and solid piety among the Faithful in England.

✠ HENRY EDWARD,

ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

June 12, 1872.




PREFACE.

THE following pages have been translated from the Italian Vita di S. Bernardino da Siena, by Father Amadio Maria, Minor Observantine of Venice, as edited by Father Costantino Maria, of Ara-Cœli, and published at Rome by Salviucci, in 1826, with the usual authorisations. It has been abridged by the omission of several miracles worked by the Saint after his death, and of the description of churches erected in his honour.

THE ORATORY, LONDON,

Feast of St. Antony of Padua, 1873.



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CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Origin, Country, Parentage, Birth, and early Education of S. Bernardine - - - -	1
II. Education of Bernardine under the Care of his Aunt - - - -	4
III. Education and Studies of Bernardine at Siena.—His singular goodness and purity - - -	8
IV. Bernardine applies himself to the study of Canon Law and Theology.—His frequent visits to his cousin Tobia.—His particular devotion to the Most Holy Virgin - - - -	13
V. Bernardine joins the Confraternity of S. Mary in the Hospital of the Scala.—His Fervour, and his Services to sufferers in the Plague - -	18
VI. Bernardine is visited by God with a long illness.—On his recovery he goes to assist his aged aunt Bartolomea.—Short account of her virtues - - - -	27
VII. Bernardine determines to become a religious, and withdraws to try himself.—Receives a vision, by which he is confirmed in the Resolution of entering the Order of S. Francis -	30
VIII. Bernardine puts himself under the conduct of Father John Ristori.—He receives the habit of Friars Minors.—Goes to the Colombajo to make his Noviciate - - - -	35
IX. Rigorous and fervent Life of Bernardine in his Noviciate.—His singular Patience in enduring injuries.—He makes his Solemn Profession -	40
X. He receives Holy Orders, celebrates his first Mass, and gives the first proof of the zeal with which he was filled for the Conversion of Sinners - - - -	45
XI. Bernardine begins to preach.—He obtains the Hermitage of Capriola.—Is wonderfully cured of hoarseness - - - -	47

CHAPTER

PAGE

- XII. State of Italy in the time of S. Bernardine.—His particular Exercises in preparing himself for the conversion of souls.—He goes to hear the preaching of S. Vincent Ferrer, who prophesies about him - - - - - 51

BOOK II.

THE RESULTS OF S. BERNARDINE'S MISSION IN LOMBARDY, THE VENETIAN STATES, AND TUSCANY.

- I. Occupations of S. Bernardine after his return from Alessandria.—God declares to him His Will that he should preach in Lombardy - 59
- II. Bernardine's journey through Lombardy.—He arrives at Milan, and preaches in that city.—His name begins to be known, and he is very successful - - - - - 63
- III. The gifts of S. Bernardine in the ministry of Preaching.—The method which he commonly observed, and the great fruit which his preaching bore - - - - - 67
- IV. Bernardine goes to preach in Liguria.—First seeds of a fierce persecution - - - - - 74
- V. Bernardine preaches a second Lenten course at Milan.—His memorable actions at this time - 79
- VI. S. Bernardine preaches in Bergamo, in the Val Seriana, Como, and Treviglio.—He begins publicly to oppose B. Manfred - - - - - 84
- VII. The Saint preaches the Lent at Mantua and works miracles there: then preaches in Cremona and Piacenza - - - - - 90
- VIII. Origin of the Convent of Corpus Christi and S. Paola at Mantua, and of that of the Holy Ghost in the same city - - - - - 94
- IX. S. Bernardine departs for Tuscany, and visits the body of the B. Peter Petronj at Siena.—On his return into Lombardy he preaches at Brescia.—Accepts the foundation of several Monasteries - - - - - 99
- X. S. Bernardine's first preaching in Venice.—He obtains a house for some Carthusian monks - 103
- XI. S. Bernardine returns to Bergamo to receive the foundation of a Convent which is much favoured by the Blessed Virgin.—He then preaches the Advent in Verona - - - - - 108
- XII. S. Bernardine preaches at Vicenza, and then travelling through the Marca of Treviso, visits Treviso, Belluno, and Feltre - - - - - 112

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIII. S. Bernardine sends Brother Albert to Modena, and stays himself to preach at Ferrara; he thence goes to Bologna, where he has wonderful success - - - - -	120
XIV. Bernardine preaches at Florence and other places, particularly at Volterra, and for a whole Lent in Prato, where he restores to health a youth who had been injured by a bull - - - - -	126
XV. Bernardine goes to preach in Siena and its territory.—At Arezzo he destroys a superstitious fountain, and builds a Church on the spot in honour of the Blessed Virgin.—S. John of Capistran puts himself under Bernardine's teaching - - - - -	131
XVI. Bernardine goes to Assisi, and thence to Perugia, where his preaching is crowned with great success.—He preaches in other towns of Umbria -	138
XVII. Bernardine, preaching in Viterbo, is maligned to the Pope, and summoned to Rome to answer for himself - - - - -	147

BOOK III.

PERSECUTIONS AND LABOURS UNDERGONE BY S. BERNARDINE.
—NEW FRUITS OF HIS APOSTOLIC MINISTRY.—LAST SICK-
NESS AND DEATH.

I. By the Pope's command, Bernardine's teaching is examined.—S. John of Capistran comes to Rome for the defence of our Saint.—The affair of the Holy Name is tried, and Bernardine's cause triumphs.—The sequel of this affair -	155
II. Bernardine preaches in Rome by the Pope's command.—He works miracles.—Refuses the see of Siena - - - - -	164
III. Bernardine's sentiments in regard to the dignities and honours of the world.—His refusal of the sees of Ferrara and Urbino - - - - -	168
IV. Of Bernardine's Humility - - - - -	173
V. Bernardine returns into Tuscany.—He preaches the glories of the Most Holy Virgin in Siena.—Proofs of his great love towards her.—In Lucca God manifests the holiness of His servant by His gifts - - - - -	177
VI. S. Bernardine preaches at Ferrara, Reggio, Modena, and Carpi.—Then traverses the whole of the Romagna and Marca of Ancona - - - - -	181

CHAPTER	PAGE
VII. Bernardine goes on to Siena, and persuades his fellow-citizens to keep the peace.—He makes the men sit apart from the women at his sermons; Consequences of this change.—He heals two sick persons - - - - -	187
VIII. Bernardine suffers fresh insults at Siena, Bologna, and Rome, but the Pope defends him, and approves his teaching by a Bull - - -	190
IX. Of the patience and meekness of Bernardine under persecution and insult - - - - -	195
X. Bernardine is slandered to the Emperor Sigismund, who afterwards conceives a great esteem for him.—His journey with the Emperor to Rome - - - - -	198
XI. Bernardine withdraws into the Convent of Capriola to write his sermons.—At Siena he reaps a wonderful harvest - - - - -	201
XII. Of the holy conversation of Bernardine, and his spiritual replies to questions - - - - -	205
XIII. God confirms the teaching of S. Bernardine with fresh graces.—He sends his Brethren, by Commission of the Pope, to preach in various parts - - -	208
XIV. S. Bernardine is appointed first Vicar-General of the Order of Observantines.—He begins to promote the growth of that Institute.—Whilst preaching the glories of the B. Virgin at Aquila, she bountifully rewards his devotion - - -	212
XV. Bernardine is summoned to the Council of Florence.—He sees the happy results of the labours of some of his disciples.—Preaches to the Greeks, and is favoured by God with the gift of tongues - - - - -	218
XVI. Extension of the Order under S. Bernardine's Rule.—He is invited to return into Lombardy.—Arrives at Milan, but is obliged to quit that city after a short stay.—His heroic act of disinterestedness and charity - - - - -	220
XVII. S. Bernardine aids the people of Florence in the achievement of a wonderful victory.—From that city he goes to Assisi; then to the Convent del Monte beyond Perugia, where he institutes studies of Moral Theology.—Takes S. John Capistran as his Coadjutor - - - - -	225
XVIII. S. Bernardine goes to meet Brother Albert on his return from his Legation to the East.—From Capriola he appoints several things for the greater advance of the Institute - - - - -	229
XIX. Which treats of certain private practices and virtues of S. Bernardine - - - - -	233

CHAPTER	PAGE
XX. Bernardine is called to Brescia, where he preaches; he then receives the Foundation of the Convent of Gardone.—Withdrawing into Tuscany, he renounces the Vicar-Generalship-	240
XXI. The Saint preaches at Milan for the last time.—Then gives the Lenten course at Padua.—The history of the foundation of S. Bernardine's Monastery in that city - - - - -	246
XXII. S. Bernardine assists at the General Chapter held at Padua.—His acts on that occasion.—Great devotion exhibited by the people of Padua on his departure.—He goes to preach for the second time at Vicenza and Verona - - - - -	252
XXIII. S. Bernardine preaches a second time at Venice, where he is held in great veneration.—He falls very sick there, but recovers - - - - -	258
XXIV. Bernardine, preaching in Ferrara, predicts several future calamities.—Some account of his other predictions - - - - -	260
XXV. S. Bernardine arrives at Siena. Brother Vincent, his faithful companion, dies, and the Saint piously deplores his loss.—He delivers his last Lenten course at Massa, where he cures a leper - - - - -	264
XXVI. S. Bernardine concludes his sermons at Siena.—His last journey to the Kingdom of Naples - - - - -	269
XXVII. Last sickness and holy death of Bernardine in the city of Aquila - - - - -	275

BOOK IV.

GLORIES OF S. BERNARDINE AFTER DEATH.

I. Concurrence of people to venerate the holy body of Bernardine, which begins to work glorious miracles.—Solemn interment of the Saint - - - - -	283
II. The body of S. Bernardine is taken back to the Church of S. Francis, and kept above ground twenty-six Days.—The people continue to throng to it, and fresh miracles are performed - - - - -	287
III. A Supernatural flow of blood from the nostrils of S. Bernardine's body appeases a fierce outbreak of the people of Aquila - - - - -	288
IV. Reputation of sanctity which the Saint gained throughout Italy after his death - - - - -	290
V. S. James della Marca and S. John Capistran arrive at Aquila.—The latter is encouraged by a supernatural event to labour for the canonization of Bernardine - - - - -	293

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI. The cities of Siena and Aquila, and Alphonso, King of Naples, sue the Pope for the canonization of Bernardine.—The first steps of the Process are taken - - - - -	295
VII. Pope Nicholas V. vindicates Bernardine's reputation from a libellous accusation; and orders fresh Processes - - - - -	299
VIII. Several obstacles make Bernardine's canonization dubious.—S. Capistran overcomes them, and, by agency of the virtue of obedience, renders it secure - - - - -	305
IX. Processes are drawn for the third time.—Fresh petitions from different Courts for Bernardine's canonization.—Other Processes for the fourth time.—Meanwhile the Saint continues to shine still more gloriously by the lustre of his miracles - - - - -	309
X. Solemn canonization of S. Bernardine - - - - -	311
XI. The cities and other places sanctified by S. Bernardine's Preaching rejoice with pious pomp at his canonization.—Churches and Altars are erected to his honour - - - - -	314
XII. S. John Capistran, in his Apostolic Legation, everywhere publishes the glories of S. Bernardine.—By his powerful letters prevails on the city of Aquila to erect a magnificent church for the Saint's remains - - - - -	320
XIII. Translation of the body of S. Bernardine - - - - -	324
XIV. Other minor translations of S. Bernardine's body - - - - -	326
XV. Of the relics of S. Bernardine, and of his sacred portrait - - - - -	330
XVI. S. Bernardine's panegyrics of the holy Name of Jesus.—Some devout aspirations which he taught to sundry persons - - - - -	332

THE INNOCENT AND DEVOUT LIFE OF
S. BERNARDINE OF SIENA.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN, COUNTRY, PARENTAGE, BIRTH, AND EARLY
EDUCATION OF S. BERNARDINE.

IN the year 1380, memorable for the happy death of that illustrious light of the famous order of penance of S. Dominic, the holy Catherine of Siena, whilst Urban VI. sat on the Chair of S. Peter, and Wenceslaus on the imperial throne of the West, another glorious luminary came into this world, the subject of our work, S. Bernardine. He was born on the 8th of September, on which day the Church celebrates the Nativity of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, in the city of Massa, which the people of that country call di Maremna. This city is mentioned by ancient historians as the birthplace of Gallus Cæsar, son of Constantius, brother of Constantine the Great ;

and at the time of which our narrative treats, it was subject to the Republic of Siena. The father of the Saint was a member of the ancient and noble family of the Albizeschi of Siena, by name Tollo, and both his father Dino, and his grandfather Bando, who were of knightly rank, had enjoyed distinguished honours in their native country. Bernardine's mother was, according to general belief, a lady of equally high birth, namely, Nera, daughter of Bindo, and grand-daughter of Ranieri, of the family of the Arveduti of Massa, who also possessed knightly rank.

The house of the Albizeschi no longer exists, having terminated gloriously in S. Bernardine, who transplanted it into the City of God; although indeed some students of antiquity have maintained that the stock is preserved in the noble family of the Albizi of Florence, which they consider the same as the Albizeschi, and akin to which they reckon also the noble house of the Alessandri of Siena. Be this as it may, it affects but little our design, which is to compile the life of one who, by his heroic actions, soared infinitely above any honour which mere ancestry or fortune could have conferred.

We must not, however, omit the common account of the manner in which the happy marriage that bore such precious fruit, was brought about. Tollo degli Albizeschi had won general esteem by his honourable and deserving life, and was destined by the Republic, in the year 1377, to be governor of Massa, a post which had been previously held with distinction three times by his father's brother, who also bore the name of Tollo. Massa, which is called *Massa Veterensis* by the ancients, lies in the territory of Siena, towards Pionbino, from which it is about

thirty miles distant; it stands on a hill looking towards the sea of Tuscany called the Lower or Tyrrhenian sea, encircled by good walls, but not blessed with a healthy air; and on account of its neighbourhood to the sea and the waters which lie stagnant in valleys and marshes around it, it is commonly known by the name of *Massa di Maremma*.

Tollo, on assuming the magistracy of this city, administered it with such prudence, honesty and skill, as to gain the applause and affection of all the citizens. The period of his office had not expired, when an aged knight, of one of the chief families of *Massa*, Bindo, the son of *Ranieri degli Avveduti*, returned to that city from the government of one of the towns of Tuscany. From the reputation of Tollo's excellent administration, and also from his own observation, as a man of long experience, of the purity of the governor's mind and the uprightness of his conduct, no less than of his ability and wisdom, Bindo became anxious to attach Tollo to himself at the expiration of his term of government, and to become his father-in-law. He had no male heir to his great wealth, and had already given one of his daughters named *Diana* in marriage to a nobleman; but there remained another daughter, *Nera*, whom the good old man designed to give in marriage to Tollo, that he might adopt him as his son and heir. It was the Will of God that this plan should be carried out; Tollo and *Nera* were united in wedlock, and not long after, on the death of Bindo, took up their abode at *Massa*. The young couple lived in a holy fear of God, and professed a particular devotion to the glorious Virgin *Mary*, in whom they had placed all their hopes, earnestly begging of her goodness to obtain for them a

son. This most indulgent mother did not long delay to grant the prayer of the pious parents. She obtained for them from her Son, the Author and Dispenser of all good gifts, an only son, whom his parents called Bernardine, after his paternal grandfather. A tradition of the people of Massa affirms that the house where he was born was on the site at present occupied by the convent of the Fathers of the Strict Observance.

The child enjoyed the happiness of his parents' care only for a short time ; for three years after his birth, his mother died at the early age of twenty-two : and three years later, her husband followed her, leaving their son Bernardine, at the age of six, under the care of his mother's sister, a widow, who undertook to bring him up as her own son.

CHAPTER II.

TENDER EDUCATION OF BERNARDINE UNDER THE CARE OF HIS AUNT.

JUST before the death of Bernardine's mother, her sister Diana had undertaken the charge of bringing him up jointly with his father Tollo ; and from that time both had begun to instil into his soul, according to its tender capacity, the first seeds of Christian piety and of devotion to the Queen of Heaven. But when she was deprived three years later of her brother-in-law, the whole burthen fell upon Diana, together with the management of the property accruing to Bernardine from his father and mother. She was a matron adorned with many distinguished virtues, which made her a mirror of prudence and honour in the widowed

state. Amongst other good qualities she was gifted with solid piety and tender love for the great Mother of God; and by this virtue she was raised to a degree of holiness of life which made her universally revered.

She applied herself to the guardianship and government of her little nephew with as much love and solicitude as though he had been her own child, providing him with masters to instruct him in the rudiments of grammar, and neglecting nothing that could tend to his advancement in learning. But she did not forget that this was the lesser part of her duty and at the same time basied herself continually with that which was the greater part, labouring to bring him up in good and honourable habits, and in the practice of Christian piety. She taught him in the first place, that all respect, submission and fear was due to God. Often did she repeat to him what reverence and love we owe to the great Mother of God, exciting him to implore and pray humbly of her that she would take his own mother's place. From this she went on to instruct him in the right manner of conduct towards all men according to the state and condition of each. To superiors, she told him, was due submission and respect in proportion to their rank; with our equals we should deal with courtesy, and with our inferiors with gentleness; we should have compassion on the poor and needy; and she furnished him occasionally with the means of succouring them with alms.

Not content with this, and knowing how much the conversation of the good serves to confirm children in well-doing, and how injurious to them on the other hand is the society of the wicked, from whom they

can only draw corruption and ruin, his good aunt taught him to shun all bad companions, and exhorted him to choose the company of those only from whose upright life he might borrow good examples and wholesome lessons. In this way, Diana proceeded to instil into the mind of Bernardine a hatred and abhorrence of all evil that could come to his knowledge, and a longing love for all that was good, and that could make his eyes pure, his ears chaste, and his heart holy and spotless.

The child Bernardine had received a good disposition, an excellent understanding, and, as it were, an innate goodness of nature which inclined him of itself to whatever was right; he gave himself up to good habits, to study, and to those works which, from being executed by the hands, are termed mechanical. Thus, as he grew older he learned to paint the most holy name of Jesus, and could make little musical instruments. Under the care and holy teaching of his aunt, he progressed so far in conduct and knowledge, that the citizens of Massa foretold that this little blossom of goodness and talent would one day be changed into a precious fruit. The innocent child took part in the occupations common to his age, as making little altars, imitating the sacred ceremonies, and other amusements of children; still in graver matters he yielded to none of his fellows, but far excelled them in their lessons, as well as in pious practices.

He was so much accustomed, even at that tender age, to give alms, that he felt no greater pleasure than in relieving beggars as far as his means would allow. It chanced once that there was hardly sufficient bread in the house for the day's supply, and his aunt was obliged in consequence to refuse a poor man

who asked an alms. Bernardine heard her answer, and, unable to bear it from the mercy which he felt towards beggars, he asked his aunt to grant the poor man's request by giving his own portion, promising that he would be content to go without dinner and supper for his sake, as he would rather that the bread were given to the beggar than to himself. Diana was moved to joy and thankfulness of heart, when she discerned in her Bernardine so gentle, generous, and compassionate a spirit; and having thus learnt by experience how well his heart was disposed to receive the good seed, she left nothing in her power undone to mature the work, inducing him from time to time, and as far as the weakness of his age would allow, to perform some fast; so that thenceforward the holy child began to fast on Saturdays in honour of the Blessed Virgin, a pious custom which he observed for the rest of his life. ✓

In this manner Bernardine had lived for five years under the pious and loving care of his aunt Diana, when it pleased the Almighty to call her to Himself. Bernardine was then not more than eleven years old; and Christopher and Angelo degli Albizeschi, the brothers of Tollo and of Philip Regolino, moved by his youth, determined to take him to Siena, God thus disposing it in order that he might be early restored to the ancient home of his fathers.

CHAPTER III.

EDUCATION AND STUDIES OF BERNARDINE AT SIENA.
HIS SINGULAR GOODNESS AND PURITY.

SIENA is an ancient and beautiful city of Tuscany, placed on a hill, and enclosed by heights of a sort of hard, dry earth, called *tufo*, so that it appears to lie amongst mountains. It was erected into a metropolitan city in 1459, by Pope Pius II., one of its citizens, of the noble house of Piccolomini. It was also a free city, and for some centuries the head of a Republic, which included many towns scattered over its ample territory, and some islands of the Tyrrhenian Sea; but in the year 1554 it was taken by the Imperial forces, and subjected to the rule of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in punishment for having espoused the part of the French in 1552, and driven away the Spanish garrison which occupied it in the name of the Emperor Charles V. From the time when it embraced the faith of Jesus Christ, which was in the reign of Constantine the Great, this city has always professed a singular devotion to the Queen of Heaven. One proof of this feeling is the dedication to her of the Cathedral, which, by reason of its valuable marbles, and exquisite workmanship, is reckoned one of the noblest and most gorgeous buildings in Europe. Another proof is the title which Siena has amongst other cities, of City of the Virgin—*Sena celus, civitas Virginis*.

The child Bernardine was brought to this city in the year 1391, and his uncle Christopher, with his wife Pia, whose life might have earned for her this name, took upon them the special care of his educa-

tion. Regarding him as their son (for their marriage had borne them none), they applied themselves to their charge with a zeal and love which overlooked nothing that could contribute either to the right guidance of the child in conduct, or to his greater progress in letters. They entrusted him at once to the direction of a master of grammar called Onofrio, under whom he quickly made such strides as to leave behind many of his elder fellow-students. And in proportion as he grew in learning, he progressed also in piety, particularly through the care of his aunt, who was nowise inferior to his first guardian Diana.

There shone forth in Bernardine from his earliest years such affability, grace, modesty, generosity, frankness, and devotion, that he became dear to all. He still continued for some time the innocent pastime to which he had applied himself when at Massa, of making little altars, and adorning them in the short hours that study left free to him. Now, however, he was not satisfied with this, but began to recite the office of the Blessed Virgin daily in her honour. Pia sometimes took him with her on feast-days to the neighbouring church of S. Augustine, and after hearing several Masses, they remained for the sermon. It is impossible to describe the attention and pleasure with which the holy child, according to the measure of his capacity, would listen to this sermon, insomuch indeed that on his return home he used immediately to collect together other children, and then, setting himself in the position of a preacher, he artlessly repeated to his audience whatever he was able to remember of the preacher's discourse. It was a foreshadowing of what he was one day to do, and many who knew of

this practice observed that he would become a famous preacher.

Bernardine, now grown somewhat bigger, had finished his lessons in grammar, when there came to Siena for the purpose of opening a school of grammar, humanities, and rhetoric, one John of Spoleto, a man celebrated for learning, and esteemed by every one a mirror of uprightness. Nothing more was desired by the good Bernardine, who lived in the greatest desire of these two objects, to make progress in virtue and gain proficiency in science. His guardians willingly consented to put him under the teaching of so great a man; and when he began to understand the lessons of this learned master, and to admire his virtuous acts, Bernardine conceived such an affection for him that, as far as he was permitted, he was never absent from him. He accordingly made, in the course of some years that he faithfully followed John of Spoleto, marvellous progress as well in *literis humanioribus*, as they are termed, as in the canons of moral philosophy. The master felt an equal esteem for the scholar, admiring silently within himself the simplicity of the youth's conduct, and the splendour of his intellect.

Indeed, there never issued from the school of John of Spoleto a more learned scholar than Bernardine, and of its many sons, none was ever known to approach him in modesty, candour of mind, and purity. In those years, which are usually the most dangerous, he was never heard to utter a word that was wanting in propriety, nor in his signs, gestures, or other things which are exposed to misinterpretation, could ought but the greatest purity be discerned. This was often said and attested after his death by the master of

whom we have just spoken, and who was still living, although in a decrepit old age. His fellow scholars, who loved him warmly for his sweet manners and his cheerful and agreeable conversation, were careful never to pronounce any improper or loose word in his presence, knowing by experience how much his purity was hurt by such expressions. They had remarked that sometimes, on hearing some improper word, he was so much disconcerted, that his face was suffused with the blush of shame, just as if some one had struck him. Thus it often happened that when discoursing together on matters on which youths, in the flush of their strength, are apt unwarily to dwell with too much freedom and pleasure, on Bernardine's appearance they would look at one another and say, "Let us talk of something else, here is Bernardine." So great was the esteem they had conceived for him, that they durst not continue before him the improper conversation in which they were engaged.

Yet this great virtue in a youth of exceeding fair looks and delicate nature, who was likewise gentle and cheerful in his manner, although it was guarded by him with all diligence, was not exempt from trial. Being one day in a square of the city not far from the fountain of Branda, a gentleman of high rank approached him, and looking full at him said some improper words. Scarcely had Bernardine understood their bad sense than he answered with a blow of his fist, intending to strike him in the face, but hitting him on the chin with such force that the blow was heard all over the square; and the gentleman, confounded at the blow, and ridiculed by many of his companions who were present, could do nothing but fly from the spot with all speed.

Many years afterwards, when the Saint was preaching in the same square, this very gentleman was amongst the crowd who were listening, and he was moved to so much compunction by the burning words of the zealous preacher and the recollection of his guilt, that with abundance of sighs and tears, he gave clear tokens of great interior sorrow.

A similar snare, and a more dangerous one than the last, was laid for the holy youth about the same time by a certain wicked man, whom some make out to have been a citizen of Siena, although others deny it. This man did not cease to indicate his wicked thoughts by signs and words. Bernardine had reproved him several times, and had repulsed his boldness with harsh admonitions; but seeing that all was in vain, and desiring to free himself once for all from the man's insolence, he collected some good youths his friends, and begged them to provide themselves with stones. Then on the first occasion that his tormentor molested him, Bernardine made him come out of the square where he was, in order not to make a disturbance, for they were close to some nobleman's palace, and, with his companions, began to throw volleys of stones at him. When the fellow ran away they pursued him in this manner from the Porta Salaria to the Pasteda, where he disappeared, and Bernardine remained victorious and free from further molestation. These two stories were rumoured about the city, and the blessed youth gained so great a reputation for virtue and integrity, that no one any longer ventured to open his mouth before him, except to speak with all modesty and propriety. He was always cheerful and playful in his conversation, and being gifted with affable and gracious manners,

he knew how to stand on a good footing with all, and willingly served all. But still, whether at school or elsewhere, he most gladly selected good and spiritual men to converse with. Such were the examples which Bernardine gave to youths at that age : and as even then he rendered himself, by his virtues and innocent conversation, estimable even to the wicked, he appeared by his modesty a model to be copied by all.

CHAPTER IV.

BERNARDINE APPLIES HIMSELF TO THE STUDY OF CANON LAW AND THEOLOGY.—HIS FREQUENT VISITS TO HIS COUSIN TOBIA.—HIS PARTICULAR DEVOTION TO THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN.

As he grew in years, Bernardine increased in virtue and learning. Being now sufficiently well versed in moral philosophy, he gave his thoughts to graver studies. He selected the study of canon law, and pursued it with such application for the space of three years as to entitle himself to the honourable degree of Doctor in that faculty. Every one expected that he would accept this distinction ; and he was commonly honoured with the title usually given to candidates for the degree, but his incomparable modesty kept him aloof from this honour, and made him rest content with having deserved it.

He passed to the study of Scripture, and in this he found such pleasure that he was never weary of pursuing it, all his past studies appearing frivolous and insipid when compared with it. He conversed continually with religious, and with

persons skilled in the sacred Scriptures, and contracted with them a holy and wholesome friendship, listening to the expounders of the sacred volume and to preachers with great eagerness and extraordinary pleasure.

Bernardine, at the age of seventeen, began to pay frequent visits to his cousin Tobia, who was more than thirty years his senior, although he shunned the society of other women. Tobia was daughter to Diana the sister of Nera, mother of S. Bernardine; and having survived her husband Guido Bartollio, of the noble family of Tolomei, she embraced the institute of the Third Order of Penance of S. Francis, and led so exemplary, religious, and devout a life in her own house, that she was in great and general repute. She served the Lord faithfully with continual prayer: she chastised her body, and brought it into subjection to the spirit by fasts, watches, and disciplines, sleeping always in her clothes. She trained herself in works of mercy towards the poor, to pilgrims, prisoners, and the sick. Of all her relations, Bernardine had engaged her particular affection when yet young; she was careful about his education, like another mother, and would never let him out of her sight, taking him with her to church, to hear the Divine Office and sermons, and to the hospitals and prisons, that with her he might serve the sick and needy. It is said that she made him inscribe himself in the Society of the Madonna *degli Angeli*, the institution of which confraternity is believed to have taken place in 1325. After S. Bernardine's canonization it took his name, by which it is still known.

Bernardine, when he arrived at mature years, con-

tinued to revere the holy matron Tobia as his mother, and indeed she bore to him a mother's love ; he held frequent conversations with her, freely discoursing of heavenly things, and recreating his mind with spiritual converse. He received the holy instructions which she gave him on the manner of walking in the paths of the Lord, and on the snares which commonly endanger the fervour and inexperience of youth. His zealous kinswoman joined prayers to her words, fervently commending him to God, to the Blessed Virgin, and to all the Saints, and strongly urging him to hold himself aloof from all carnal desire and love, and to keep himself pure, simple, and unspotted. Bernardine, who desired nothing so much as virtue and purity, perceiving the holy zeal of Tobia, which filled her with anxious apprehension, chose with that joyous and playful spirit that was natural to him, to excite her fears. He told her with a smile, more than once, on taking leave of her, that he wanted to go and see a lady, a friend of his, adding sometimes that she was the most beautiful and amiable person in the city ; at other times he would say that he loved her so warmly that he could not have found rest that night unless he had beheld her sweet face the day before.

Tobia at first thought that he was speaking in jest, but she questioned him as to his friend, and where she lived, and having received in answer a fresh assertion of her excellent and rare gifts, and a protestation of Bernardine's regard for her, as well as the statement that her residence was outside the Porta Camullia, she began to conceive a suspicion and fear of some snare for the youth. On the one hand she could not bring herself to believe that such expressions re-

ferred to any mortal creature, as she knew Bernardine's worth and piety, rare indeed in the secular state, for he fasted very often, assisted at Mass daily, was assiduous in hearing the divine word, and in practices of prayer; he seldom passed a night without snatching from it some intervals for devotion, loved retirement, never went out at night, and manifested a mortal aversion to idleness, and to profane talk. But on the other hand, viewing his fair and gentle countenance, and remembering the stratagems of the devil, the frailty of the flesh, and the proneness of man to evil, she was fearful that there might be living outside the gate some young girl of whom he was enamoured.

Tobia was thus divided between hope and fear, but was also greatly afflicted, lest the pains she had taken to instruct Bernardine and to incite him to the love of virtue should prove in vain. Unable to find rest in the tumult of her thoughts, she determined to assure herself with her own eyes, and the next day she proceeded towards the Porta Camullia, which is on the road to Florence, and from a neighbouring church called Santa Maria Novella, set herself to watch, secretly and beyond the reach of observation, Bernardine's course and conduct. She saw him arrive at the gate, and kneeling down on the bare stone, offer up a most fervent prayer to a holy picture of the glorious Virgin over the gate, which represented her Assumption amidst a host of angels; and from that spot he returned straight home. This might have sufficed to calm his holy cousin's mind; but as love is ever full of anxious fear, and her affection for Bernardine was great, Tobia was not satisfied. She returned again to the same spot, and saw exactly the same scene as before;

and as she still seemed to fear some deception of her sight, she made a faithful companion, to whom she had related the affair, visit the same place for the like purpose ; but she could not learn anything which cast suspicion of profane love on the youth. She now clearly understood his parable, and learnt the holy affection of her cousin towards the B. Virgin, and his anxiety to honour her daily in her holy image.

Tobia laid aside all mistrust, and when Bernardine came to see her as usual, she begged him with a heart full of joy, not to keep her any longer in doubt, but to reveal to her sincerely who was the maiden with whom he had often said that he was in love, for that if she were a good match for him, she would arrange their marriage. The respectful love of Bernardine for his aunt was so great that he could not any longer conceal from her a secret which he would never have confided to any other person. He answered therefore, that as it had pleased God, the Author of all blessings, to instil into his heart from his tenderest years an ardent love for His Mother, he had ever loved and put his trust in her ; she was his only love, the object of his constant desire. But as he was unable to obtain his wish in this mortal life, he had resolved to venerate the figure or picture of the Mother of God which stood over the Porta Camullia, as this appeared to him the most beautiful, and from its majesty the most appropriate of all the pictures of the kind in the city. He prostrated himself before it at least twice a day, morning and evening, hoping to obtain by the merits of Mary divine grace and mercy, as she, the glorious Virgin-Mother of God, was his friend and most assured hope.

Tobia, on hearing this, could not contain her tears for joy, and embracing Bernardine, assured him that no base suspicion of his integrity had gained full entrance into her soul, but only a doubt, from her knowledge of the arts which the devil employs to seduce youth. She congratulated him on having made choice of the best of friends, the secure refuge of our salvation, and she exhorted him not to allow this loving fire of devotion to the most Holy Virgin ever to cool in his heart, but on the contrary, to raise it more and more every day into a flame. Bernardine, as many parts of his life will show, faithfully obeyed this counsel, and in the meantime, as long as he lived in the world, continued to make his daily visits of devotion to the holy image. After having entered into religion, he was wont, according to the testimony of his companions, to pay the same visit even in his old age, every time that he happened to be in Siena.

CHAPTER V.

BERNARDINE JOINS THE CONFRATERNITY OF S. MARY
IN THE HOSPITAL OF THE SCALA. HIS FERVOUR,
AND HIS SERVICES TO SUFFERERS IN THE
PLAGUE.

IN the heart of the city of Siena there is a famous hospital, erected in honour of the glorious Virgin Mary, for the reception of sick poor and pilgrims, founded, it is said, towards the latter half of the eighth

century, by one Sororio, a shoemaker, who is honoured with the title of Blessed. It was a small house at first, as is generally the case, but grew in greatness, wealth, and the practice of works of charity, so as to become the chief hospital of the town, and to enjoy a very ample revenue. This house is always open and ready to receive any sick person, and to tend him for any sort of disease. When, in course of time, the foundation of this hospital (which is called, from the steps which lead up to it, della Scala) was fully established, there was founded in it likewise a confraternity of worthy men commonly called the Disciplinati, who assembled there for the exercise of works of piety and prayer, for the discipline and other mortifications, and shed through all Italy the fragrance of their pious institute, to such a degree that in many cities confraternities of laymen were founded on their model.

Many holy men issued from this school of perfection, after having learned in it the foundation of a spiritual life, such as B. John Colombini, founder of the Gesuats, and his dear and faithful companion, Francis Vincenti; B. Bernard Tolomei, and the other founders of the Congregation of Mount Olivet; B. Peter Petronj, a Carthusian; B. Andrew Gallerani, and many other eminent contemplatives, and members of various religious institutes; besides which, it served for many years as the mirror and model of perfection for men in the world.

Bernardine, who was one day to throw a greater splendour than any other on this confraternity, being desirous of serving God better, and of advancing in piety under the glorious banner of the B. Virgin, solicited admission as a brother of the

house. None were admitted who had not rendered themselves worthy, by acquiring a good reputation with all for their honest and Christian conduct. Bernardine was judged most worthy of admission, and had no sooner manifested his wish, than all the brothers were unanimous in cordially desiring his reception. He applied himself faithfully day and night to the practices, both severe and light, which were performed in common; but he distinguished himself by his fervour, which rendered him more zealous than any of the rest, and more continual in self-chastisement and prayer.

Although the ordinary exercises which were practised in the house would have been enough for any other man, they did not satisfy the ardent spirit of Bernardine. He added to them privately others of a kindred character, in order to subdue the flesh, and render it subject to the spirit. For many years he was wont to scourge himself with whips of small cord, and often, too, with nettles; besides wearing a hair shirt, he slept always in his clothes, not at ease on a soft bed, but on a hard chest, or bench; and although he did these things with the greatest secrecy, desiring solely to please God, and to be seen by Him alone, it was ever arranged by Providence that they should be unexpectedly made known to some of his comrades. Although sparing in his meals, he followed the common life, avoiding equally excess in dainties, and singularity in coarser meats. Such were the austerities which he practised towards himself, but with others he was ever cheerful, joyous, humble, affable, and accommodating to every one's temper. An enemy of sadness and sloth, he was ready and assiduous in working, and never seen

angry or ill-humoured. He loved truth and sincerity of speech, was full of charity to his neighbour, and, in particular, of pity for the poor. In all things he comported himself with great prudence and circumspection; and was so engaging and gracious in conversation, that melancholy had no place in his presence. But above all the fair gifts with which he was adorned, that of goodness and modesty shone with a constant splendour, and there was not a young man in Siena who could be compared with him in this respect.

Such was the virtuous life of Bernardine in his youth, when, in the year 1400, the horrible pestilence that desolated Italy found its way into Siena. It was the year of the Jubilee announced by Pope Boniface IX., and in consequence a countless crowd of pilgrims, on their way to and from Rome, applied for admission at the celebrated hospital of Santa Maria della Scala. Such a multitude could not but cause confusion; indeed, the contagious disease continued to spread in the house from day to day, so that for more than three months pilgrims, sometimes to the number of more than twenty a day, perished of the disorder; and more than a hundred and fifty of the establishment of the hospital,—brothers, ministers, priests, clerks, servants, and children, were carried off. The putrid smell of the place was so very repulsive that no one would engage in the service of the unhappy wretches at any price. The governor of the hospital, a nobleman called John of Ghiandaroni, who was full of charity and zeal, performed his duty, and spared no efforts to repair the mischief. But what could a man stricken in years, without the help of attendants, or the means of procuring them, do to meet

this emergency? He was much afflicted, and instant in fervent prayer with God and His B. Mother, under whose patronage this pious house was placed, that they would deign to provide for the urgent wants of the unhappy sufferers. His prayers were not without effect. Bernardine, who knew of the misfortunes of the hospital, considering within himself the unhappy state of these wretched beings, destitute alike of help for their bodily wants, and of consolation for their souls, felt himself inspired with the resolution, the more heroic and worthy of his great heart, as it was arduous and full of danger, of devoting himself to the service of the poor of Jesus Christ, for His love, and for the honour of His glorious Mother. He was ashamed that his cousin Tobia should surpass him, notwithstanding the weakness of her sex; for on this occasion she had dedicated herself to the service of the poor female pilgrims in the same hospital. Bernardine was not yet twenty years old, yet without any fear of the death to which he was exposing himself, he presented himself joyfully and courageously to the governor, who received him with good-will, but could not, at the sight of so much charity, contain his tears. Bernardine at once undertook the laborious work of love with the greatest diligence and zeal. For some weeks he persevered in it with constancy, but seeing that the number of attendants was very small, and that of the plague-stricken very great, he bethought himself of inviting some of his companions to share with him the meritorious office; and calling together twelve, he exhorted them to join him, saying that whoever ministers to Christ's poor, ministers to Himself; so that they who die in such a service, die for Christ.

Nothing dearer or more to be desired can happen to a Christian than this, as Christ has died for us with infinite love ; and as they were all of the same confraternity, they ought to unite in this great work, in which that God, for Whose love they exposed their lives, would help them. Let them consider, he said, what security they could have of escaping death in the deplorable state to which things had come, with the plague dealing general havoc through the world. They might see many mown down by the terrible scythe of death, some from amongst their friends and companions, who had appeared but a little time before well and strong ; and if so sad a fate awaited them, it were far better that they should be found busied in this holy exercise of charity, from which death would open to them the way to Paradise. If, however, they should escape, they would have fair cause of joy and congratulation for the remainder of their lives, in recalling to mind that they had rendered such a service to Christ, Who leaves no good work unrewarded.

These ardent words of Bernardine were like so many arrows gently wounding the hearts of the good youths, and they determined to join him. He continued to exhort them to prepare themselves beforehand by an exact and contrite confession of their faults, and to fortify themselves by receiving the holy communion, the arm of the strong. They obeyed him faithfully, and having thence derived great fervour, entered joyfully into the hospital under the guidance of Bernardine, who went before them in work and example. When the good Rector of the Hospital saw Bernardine at the head of this chosen company of noble followers of Christ, of whom he

was foremost in devotion to the service of these poor invalids, he raised his hands to heaven in gratitude to God for that in this great necessity He had provided so timely an aid, and at once consigned to Bernardine almost all the keys of the house, laying on him all the charge of the sick and of everything needful for their relief, and giving him ample powers to receive pilgrims, distribute alms, and order and dispose of all things as if he had been the chief master of all the property belonging to the pious house of the most glorious Virgin. Encouraged by this, the ardent Bernardine, having added many companions to the first twelve by his exhortations and example, began to set in order the affairs of the hospital, which for want of assistants had fallen into great confusion.

He distributed the offices, service, and work of the house according to time, place, and circumstances, adapting them to the character and activity of his assistants, so these voluntary servants in works of charity might enjoy at the same time the fruits of their labour. But he endeavoured to be present everywhere himself, in order to satisfy the ardent longings of his charity. He spared neither labour, nor watching, nor any other inconvenience. He assisted the sick day and night, administering medicine and food to them, applying plasters, and cleansing their wounds ; nor was there any office, however loathsome or vile, in regard to the bodies of the plague-stricken, which he did not enter into with good-will and delight. Amidst these occupations, so repulsive to nature, he appeared always so fresh and vigorous, and laboured with such readiness and cheerfulness of mind, that it seemed as if he were engaged in the care of his father, of his brothers, or of his own children.

This should cause little astonishment, for in serving the sick, Bernardine served God, Who is more than father, brother, or son to us.

Making himself all to all, at times he wept in sympathy with them, and shared in their trouble ; at times, he amused them with sweet playfulness ; or again, he animated them with gentle words to meet death, instilling into them sentiments worthy of Heaven. A prayer has been produced from the archives of the hospital, said to be written by the Saint, in which he suggests to the dying victims of the pestilence to invoke the glorious Virgin Mary to their assistance in the great passage of death ; it runs as follows : " Holy Mary, Virgin of virgins, Mother and Daughter of the King of all kings, sanctuary of the most holy Trinity, mirror of angels, ladder of all saints, secure refuge of sinners, look with pity on my danger ; receive me, most merciful Lady, at my last breath, and give to me thy most merciful Son. Amen. Mary, Mother of grace, Mother of mercy, defend us from the enemy, and receive us at the hour of death. Amen."

But above everything else, Bernardine was most careful to call in the priests in due time to administer the sacraments to the dying, and he was no less exact in procuring for the deceased a fitting burial. He often washed the feet of the pilgrims in sound health, who repaired from every part to the hospital ; he provided them with food, prepared their beds, and when there were not enough ready, he put many others on the floor, so that no one was without a place in which to take necessary rest. In short, so minute was the attention which he bestowed on everything, that he caused fires to be lighted frequently, and employed vinegar

and other strong fumigations to counteract the horrible stench which pervaded the house; so that the air, which everywhere around breathed corruption, was here somewhat purified. By this means he relieved the sick, and made the attendants engage in their labour with greater courage.

This conduct, which Bernardine pursued with such burning love and holy fervour for the sake of Christ, was intolerable in the eyes of some of his nearest relations. For regarding these actions, as the world is wont to do, with the eyes of the flesh, they loaded him daily with reproaches, abusing him and calling him mad and absolutely senseless, as one who was without any regard for life, which no one is so insane as not to preserve with care, and as a person who had chosen so mean and disgusting a profession as to redound to the dishonour of their high blood, and the eternal infamy of his family.

Bernardine, however, who saw with very different eyes, was far from losing heart, and boldly pursued his ministry without paying attention to this language, as one who sought earnestly to render himself pleasing to that God for Whose love he laboured, and who knew that the despised employment which he had undertaken for that love, rendered him worthy of eternal glory. He passed more than four months in these labours, trials, watchings, and inconveniences, always healthy, ready, fervent, and unwearied, by God's permission, Who reserved him to gather great fruit in His vineyard; whilst a considerable number of his companions, attacked by the contagion in the exercise of their charity, passed to receive from God the price of their toils. At last the plague entirely ceased, and Bernardine, seeing that his services were

no longer needed in this house, resolved to return home, where his Master was about to increase his crown of merit by sickness.

CHAPTER VI.

BERNARDINE IS VISITED BY GOD WITH A LONG ILLNESS.—ON HIS RECOVERY HE GOES TO ASSIST HIS AGED AUNT BARTOLOMEA.—SHORT ACCOUNT OF HER VIRTUES.

ONE day, shortly after Bernardine had returned home rich in merit from the hospital, being by chance at the house of his great friend Hildebrand de' Manetti, he was suddenly attacked by a violent fever, which obliged him to remain where he was, and soon reduced him to a desperate state. Occasionally the fever abated, but his illness was protracted for four months, it being the Will of God to visit His servant for the same period that he had spent in visiting His poor, and in this way to reward the labours which Bernardine had undergone for His love, by a fresh accession of merit. His cousin Tobia, who loved him as her son, and Justina de' Manetti, the wife or sister of Hildebrand, a devout and charitable matron, waited on him day and night, never leaving his side until he was cured. The patience of Bernardine under this visit from God was very great, and although nothing could disturb his soul, still he was grieved that the pious ladies we have mentioned should display so much anxiety, and submit to so many inconveniences on his account.

At the end of four months it pleased God that Bernardine should recover his former health, and regain with bodily strength a still larger measure of vigour of spirit to resume his wonted exercise of devotion. He had an aunt on the father's side, by name Bartolomea, a venerable matron, now for many years the widow of Trogliardo de' Tolomei. This lady was nearly ninety years of age, blind, deaf, and subject to a nervous complaint, so that from her infirmities she was obliged to remain always in bed. It happened that about the time of which we now speak, she was left in want of necessary help and service by the death of a faithful and spiritual companion, who had been her only assistant. Bernardine hearing of this circumstance, resolved immediately to enter on the charitable work of the deceased, and to engage in her service with the love which a son would show towards his mother. The delicate youth did not shrink from those low and repulsive offices which one who waits on the utterly helpless must discharge. In this work of love the holy youth passed more than a year, when the good old lady, released by death, departed to heaven, as we may piously believe from the general reputation of her sanctity, her devout life, and her virtues, which have merited for her in some histories, and in the *Menologio Agostiniano*, the title of Blessed. We cannot refrain from inserting a brief account of her life, since the virtues of the aunt render the sanctity of the nephew more illustrious.

Bartolomea degli Albizechi, after the death of her husband, who was a member of the noble family of the Tolomei, received the habit of the Mantellate of S. Augustine from the hands of the Prior of the sacred

convent of S. Salvatore at Lecceto. This convent enjoyed the highest veneration at that time, from its containing many most holy religious of the eremitical institute of S. Augustine. In 1408, by a bull of Pope Gregory XII., who was a Venetian of the most noble patrician family of Correr, the habit of hermits was changed into that of canons. Under the direction of these saintly religious Bartolomea lived for very many years, observing the rule of S. Augustine, and careful to reduce her body by fasts, watches, disciplines, and other austerities. She was assiduous in the exercise of prayer, in which she was inflamed with an inexpressible devotion to the most holy Name of Jesus.

She bore it ever in her heart and on her lips, and although gifted with great prudence and wisdom, yet whenever she heard this most sweet Name either in private conversation or in sermons, she seemed to be transported beyond herself by the fervour of her soul to a sort of ecstasy, repeating the sacred word many times with laboured breathing, a hoarse voice, and shrill accents, without being able in the least to restrain her feelings. Under prolonged and afflicting illness she gave thanks to God continually, and from the couch on which she lay she often sang the praises of the only-begotten Son of God in a loud and clear voice.

She was the teacher from whom Bernardine learnt his fervent love for this Name which is above every name, and his longing desire to bear it, like another S. Paul, to princes and people, so as to imprint devotion to it on the hearts of all; a desire which, as we shall see, he carried out with wonderful fruit. It was the opinion of many persons that as S. Augustine was

converted to God through the prayers and tears of his mother S. Monica, so this pious woman had obtained by her long prayers of many years that her nephew Bernardine should go forward always in the way of the Lord and perfectly establish himself therein. It is certain that he was moved by her repeated exhortations and entreaties that he would embrace the monastic institute of the hermits of S. Augustine, and conversed freely and frequently with those holy religious ; their life and practices pleased him so highly that many people believed that he would request to be admitted into their order, if he were not deterred by the affection which he bore his aunt, whom he had inwardly resolved never to forsake as long as she lived. Upon her death in the year 1401, full of years and merits, Bernardine, who had now entered the twentieth year of his age, being desirous of advancing in the service of God, turned his thoughts to the choice of a state of life, and to retirement in the safe harbour of some religious order.

CHAPTER VII.

BERNARDINE DETERMINES TO BECOME A RELIGIOUS, AND WITHDRAWS TO TRY HIMSELF.—RECEIVES A VISION, BY WHICH HE IS CONFIRMED IN THE RESOLUTION OF ENTERING THE ORDER OF S. FRANCIS.

BERNARDINE, on finding himself released from every tie, and enjoying full liberty after the death of his good aunt, began to think of embracing some generous resolution ; the more so that, as he felt the flame of

divine love daily growing in his heart, he was no longer satisfied with what he had done, or could do in the world, for his Lord's service. He therefore aspired to lead a more perfect life, and to give himself up entirely to the worship of God in some order. His spirit, however, remained wavering amidst these thoughts and wishes, because, though he felt himself strongly drawn towards the religious state, he could not yet discover to what order God called him. That he might learn the divine Will, and at the same time make trial of himself, whether he was really fit to endure the rigour and observances of a religious life, for his humility made him esteem as nothing the sufferings and labours which he had gone through serving the plague-stricken in the hospital, Bernardine determined to withdraw from the city into some lonely spot.

For this purpose he fixed on a house in the gardens near the Porta Tufi, and having made an oratory in a retired part of it, he erected therein a little chapel and altar with a crucifix above it, and in front a lamp, which he kept continually burning. Here, with greater rigour than he had hitherto practised, he began to treat himself with holy cruelty. He doubled his accustomed prayers, prolonged his vigils, made his disciplines more severe, and his hair-shirts more irritating, and in fasting, was so strict, that in order not to fail in making every trial of himself, he came at last to feed on herbs and roots, and to drink only water. As he thought it little to have reduced his sleep so much as not to spend in it more than three hours a night, he further rendered his rest uneasy by using a sack of vine-branches as a bed, and a log of wood or a stone for a pillow.

All the spare time that his devotional exercises

allowed him were spent in meditation on the sacred Scriptures or in reading pious books. In this practice he found all his recreation and delight, shutting up within his heart as in a well-closed desk the divine lessons and the pious instructions which it yielded him. He loved the conversation of good men more than ever, and followed with particular attention in the footsteps of those whose examples of virtue were conspicuous, in order to copy them. In short, in the retirement of this house, with the idea of proving his strength to see if he could be fit for the regular life, he conducted himself as a perfect religious, and a faithful emulator of the life of those holy anchorites of Palestine, who are described by S. Jerome. Meanwhile, he ceased not to offer up to God, generally prostrate on the floor, fervent prayers accompanied with burning tears that He would deign to dispose him to receive the habit of that order in which he might serve Him with freedom of spirit, and in the manner most pleasing to His Divine Majesty.

Whilst he was praying in this fashion before the crucifix, and immersed in the consideration of that unspeakable charity with which God has loved us, by which He chose to be laid in a small manger, to be brought up in the straits of poverty, to live in lowliness, to be buffeted by persecution, to be covered with reproaches, ill-treated, and almost reduced to nothing, and by which at last He chose to offer Himself up as a holocaust for the salvation of all, being made obedient even to the death of the cross, Bernardine felt himself inwardly enlightened to abandon his native country, and to strip himself of every earthly thing in order to follow Christ in poverty and detachment. Of the many holy orders which were

then flourishing in the Church of God, two in particular attracted his favour, and appeared to him best adapted to the accomplishment of his desires—those of S. Dominic and of the seraphic S. Francis. He had previously procured the rules of each in order to examine them, and see which was most in consonance with the light received by him in prayer. But he had no sooner read that which S. Francis prescribes to his followers, than without further care, he laid aside all doubt, and settled firmly to follow it, finding the model of the gospel life in its greater contempt of the world, and its humble, poor, and mortified state, which is a lively imitation of the detachment of Christ, and of the poverty of His cross.

It happened that at the same time he received a vision, by which he was still further confirmed in the resolution he had formed. Having fallen asleep one night after his usual prayer, he seemed to be outside the walls of the city, near a fountain which, in memory of this vision, is called to this day the fountain of S. Bernardine, and may be seen beyond the Porta Ovale on the way through the valley of Ravacciano. Not far from this fountain was a convent of Minors, and a tree planted by the seraphic Father S. Francis in the year 1225. It seemed then to Bernardine that he was taken to this fountain, and saw a spacious and sumptuous palace with many windows, whilst the whole interior was penetrated and surrounded by fire, which consumed it on all sides. This fire seemed very fierce, so that the flames, not content with devouring all within, sought to escape by the windows. Bernardine saw that in the midst of this destruction one room and window remained uninjured, and that a man, who was clothed in the habit of S.

Francis, approaching the window in order to escape the imminent danger of the fire, was about to throw himself out headlong, but on seeing the danger of this, called loudly with outstretched arms on S. Francis, and then retired into the room. He saw the same thing done in the same way a second and a third time, the man calling on S. Francis, then drawing back and retreating into the room each time. Finally, he saw that the whole palace was consumed and fell a prey to the vast conflagration, with the exception only of that room and window, from which the man dressed as a Friar Minor had called on S. Francis, and by this means escaped from the fire safe and sound.

Bernardine awaking, and reflecting seriously on what he had seen in his sleep, decided that God had given him this vision for his instruction, to make him understand that by enrolling himself under the standard of Francis of Assisi, the great captain of Christ, he might escape from the flames of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which make such wild havoc amongst men. Bernardine retained this vision afterwards in his memory as freshly as if he had but just received it. Hence, after having understood its mysterious signification, his mind remained so efficaciously confirmed in the vocation to the lowly and poor institute of the Friars Minors, that he sought it with his whole heart, being impatient to arrive at the completion of his desires, but not neglecting in the meantime to employ himself entirely in preparing the means of attaining it.

CHAPTER VIII.

BERNARDINE PUTS HIMSELF UNDER THE CONDUCT OF FATHER JOHN RISTORI.—HE RECEIVES THE HABIT OF FRIARS MINORS.—GOES TO THE COLOMBAJO TO MAKE HIS NOVICIATE.

BEFORE Bernardine thought that enough time had elapsed to prove what he wanted, he had remained for some months in solitude in the house of his choice at the Porta Tufi. When he at last understood that God called him to the order of the Friars Minors, he thought of seeking amongst those brethren for one of singular goodness and prudence, who would undertake to direct him in this important matter. A pious Minor of the name of John Ristori had returned not long before to Siena, his native place, after having laboured with great zeal for the space of thirty years at the conversion of the heretics, particularly of the Manichees in the kingdom of Bosnia (of whom he had brought back vast numbers to the holy Catholic faith), and having visited as a pilgrim the adorable memorials of our redemption in the Holy Land.

The name of this religious father was every where famous, and he was commonly held to be almost a Saint, both from the fact of his having spent his life in apostolic labours and in penance, and because men found him a man of age and experience, of solid worth and great wisdom ; and in consequence many resorted to him to be guided and instructed in the ways of the Lord. Bernardine, amongst others, eagerly approached the worthy father, and found in him what he sought, a man after his own heart.

Choosing him as his confessor, Bernardine opened to him the secrets of his conscience, and manifested his desire of embracing a higher state of life in the Order of S. Francis ; and asking for counsel, he put himself entirely in his director's hands.

It did not seem prudent to the old man to give his advice hastily in an affair of so much weight, or without first having had recourse to the Father of Lights ; he took time therefore, and in several conversations, as occasion offered, sought to assure himself of the motive of Bernardine's choice, whether it proceeded from juvenile fervour, or from a true and solid love of virtue. Much time, however, was not required to inform the wise director, from his discourses with the saintly youth, what a foundation Christian virtue had in his soul. He approved his vocation to the Order of Minors, and exulting greatly in his heart, that there should have fallen into his hands a youth of such uprightness of conduct, robust strength, and handsome appearance, well instructed in all the sciences, of sound faith and fervent spirit, he promised to use his endeavours for the speedy accomplishment of the holy desires of Bernardine. But, above all, he warned him how much he ought to do in order to dispose himself to entire obedience to the evangelical counsels and the rules of the Order, which require of every one who enters it to follow Christ, to go and sell all his possessions, and distribute the price to the poor.

Bernardine, with the greatest promptitude, consented to this, and Father Ristori presented him to his superiors, asking that the youth, whose many good qualities and virtues rendered him in every way estimable, should be admitted to their holy order.

Father Marcovaldo of S. Miniato then governed the province of Tuscany, and Father Galgano of Massa, a famous preacher of that day, was his substitute in Siena and its district, with the title of Commissary. Father Bartolomeo Franceschi was Provincial, and Father Evangelista Agostino guardian at Siena. These worthy Fathers, for the respect they bore to Father Ristori, who made the application, as well as for the singular merit of the youth, with which they were already acquainted, very willingly admitted Bernardine, but on condition that Father Ristori himself should undertake the charge of conducting his noviciate. It would have been wrong to refuse so good an opportunity ; all was thus arranged, and even the day for the clothing was appointed, provided that meantime the good youth should finally arrange his affairs in the world.

Bernardine, with incredible joy, departed immediately for Massa, where lay the main part of the ample property left him by his parents, and selling part of his rich possessions and houses, and giving part of them away, he dispensed all his money in that city and in Siena to poor maidens for their marriage, to the hospital della Scala, for the adornment of churches, and the relief of many poor and needy persons, so that being released from every impediment, and from all thought of worldly substance, he presented himself joyfully and courageously on the appointed day to follow the poverty and privations of Christ. It was the 8th of September, when the Church celebrates the memory of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and on that day, on which he completed his twenty-second year, Bernardine received the sacred habit of the seraphic Order, with the greatest devotion and

holy jubilation of heart, from the hands of his master, Father John Ristori, in the church of the Friars Minors of Siena, before the high altar, which is dedicated to the holy patriarch Francis.

We must not omit to record a notable event in the holy ceremony. The occasion created general excitement through the city, and universal admiration of the singular piety and generous resolution of Bernardine, a delicate youth who thus trampled under foot all the hopes which he might have entertained in the world from the distinction of his illustrious family and the abundance of his possessions. But what deserves greater consideration is the feeling of Father Ristori, who, after having invested Bernardine with the sacred habit, was transported out of himself, and as it were inebriated with the Spirit of God, uttered a prophecy, saying in a clear voice, so as to be heard by every one : " It is a long time since our Order has received a brother like him who has this day joined us. He will gather a great harvest into the granaries of the Lord, and be the glory and ornament of the Order, which will receive increase through his means."

For two months Bernardine remained at Siena as a novice, in order to learn the institute of the religious life, and the strict observance of the rule of S. Francis, under the teaching and discipline of the experienced Father Ristori. He was not, however, without some trouble of spirit on account of the frequent and importunate visits of his relations and friends, who did not allow him to enjoy in tranquillity the peace of the cloister, nor to attend with that freedom which he wished to interior recollection in prayer, and to the perfect mastering of his duties. He therefore had recourse to his director, who advised him to

leave his native place, and withdraw into a small convent called the Colombajo.

This was a place under Monte Amiata in the tract of Siena, which was occupied by S. Francis when he passed through Tuscany in the year 1221, and in part built by him in accordance with his much-loved poverty ; a spot highly suitable for contemplation and for those who have just entered into religion, because it is far from the commerce of men, and surrounded by thick trees. For two years this little convent had been inhabited by a few strict observers of the purity of their rule, such as were then rarely to be met with in any part of Italy, under the direction of Father John di Stroncone, who was appointed superior over the little flock by the B. F. Paoluzio Vignozzi of Foligno. Nothing more was wanting to Bernardine, who, when he had heard of the holy conversation and severe life of the few inhabitants of this lonely place, desired eagerly to be united with them. Having then received the blessing of his master, he flew with joy and a light heart to the Colombajo, where he made, as a novice, that wonderful progress of which we shall give an account in the following pages.

CHAPTER IX.

RIGOROUS AND FERVENT LIFE OF BERNARDINE IN HIS NOVICIATE.—HIS SINGULAR PATIENCE IN ENDURING INJURIES.—HE MAKES HIS SOLEMN PROFESSION.

WHEN Bernardine had entered the devout little convent of the Colombajo, he found in it as many masters to lead the way for him, by their zeal for the pure observance of the seraphic institute, and their study of mortification, as there were members of the house ; and moved by such examples, he applied himself at once with all diligence to copy in perfection the gospel mode of life, and to submit his own judgment and will entirely to another for the love of Christ. He began with his body, and if, whilst living in the world, he had many times chastised it with disciplines and hair-shirts, he now set himself to crucify it entirely with its vices and concupiscences, and to make himself a new man, created according to God in justice, truth, and holiness.

Not content with observing those fasts which are ordered by the rule of the Friars Minors, he added others, and kept other Lents, chiefly on bread and water. In this year he began a method of rigorous watching, in which he persevered for the space of twelve years. It consisted in not returning to rest after having recited matins at midnight, and spending the remaining hours until morning either in study or in the contemplation of divine things ; often, besides, he scourged himself with rods or whips.

His attention to the observance of a regular life

was most exact. The love of holy poverty and self-contempt had so strongly penetrated his breast, that in this, the year of his noviciate, he wore nothing but his habit, a pair of drawers, and the cord with which he was girt; and there was no occupation, however tedious, vile, or despicable, in which he did not willingly employ himself. He submitted to all, and obeyed all, considering himself in his heart the vilest and lowest of all the sinners in the world. Prostrate before the crucifix, he implored mercy with sighs and tears, thanking God with a lively heart for having called him to an institute in which he might serve Him with a calm conscience and firm hope. If any brother fell sick, the charity of Bernardine made him eager in his service. He went out to ask for alms of bread and wine from door to door, and carried them on his shoulders, sometimes for a very long distance, and always with bare feet. He observed this way of walking for several years, until he was obliged by necessity to wear sandals. In the church and choir he appeared an angel, so great was the attention and fervour with which he sang the Psalms and prayed.

The good religious admired the young novice's severity of life, singular meekness, cheerful conversation, angelic modesty, sincere humility, prompt obedience, and universal charity, and for these qualities they loved him tenderly. They had good cause for this feeling, for Bernardine, although the last of their number, advanced so marvellously in virtue and in the duties of his rule during this year, that he seemed to the eyes of the devout little family a bright light and mirror of sanctity. One of the means of which Bernardine made use, to draw such copious fruit from

his noviciate, was his continual meditation, of which he made the Passion of Christ the ordinary subject. He never called to mind how much the Son of God had done and suffered for us in His most holy life, without feeling himself inflamed to do great things, and to suffer for His love any hardship, however trying and severe to the body. Nay, whenever he represented to himself in meditation the persecutions and flight, the hunger and thirst, the cold and frost, the laborious journeys, the cords and scourges, the scoffs, buffets, and affronts, the thorns, sufferings, and shame of the cross, and finally the most agonizing death of his Lord, when, stripped of His clothes, and fastened with large nails through His Hands and Feet, He suffered for us through His boundless love, so sharp was the sword of compassion with which Bernardine felt himself pierced, that he wept most bitterly, and it seemed as if his heart would break from the violence of his love. Thus, too, it happened whenever he meditated on the desolation and sorrows of the most Blessed Virgin, either at the foot of her dear Son's cross, or when holding His most sacred Body after it was taken down from it.

Such was the commencement of Bernardine's career in the religious life, by which, if he obtained the ever growing love of the good, he was far from producing the same impression on the evil-minded, ignorant, and worldly. By these he was regarded, because of his contempt of himself and the world, as a fool, and as an abortive offspring of a noble house. Nor did they fail to exhibit this opinion on more than one occasion. Although Bernardine, whilst a novice, had withdrawn out of Siena to the little convent of the Colombajo, still he was sometimes sent

by his superior into the city, accompanied by another religious, either to beg, or for some other good purpose. It happened that, having gone one day to visit the house of his cousin and spiritual mother Tobia, he met there another relation, who had been highly displeased at his having entered an order, and who, not having yet been able to master his anger, began to insult him, and to load him with injurious words, saying amongst other things, that his relations did not expect such conduct from him; they had hoped that he would have lived honourably in the world, and have taken a fruitful wife, to raise a numerous offspring, by which their family would have grown in wealth, and become still more glorious in the world; adding at last, that a friar was nothing but a fat pig, being always at his ease, and living like a coward in consuming the labours of others, and always seeking wherewith to fatten himself. The world speaks ever thus of the servants of God. Bernardine listened to his insults with a tranquil mind until he had finished speaking, and then, as if foreseeing what would one day happen in his regard, answered courteously, and in a low tone of voice, that he indeed despised the false glory and vain pomps of the world; but that, nevertheless, such glory would be conferred through himself on their race, and that there would be no other family in Siena which could compare with theirs in distinction, fame, or greatness. Having said this, and courteously bid his cousin Tobia farewell, he departed for the Colom-bajo, well pleased, and rejoicing in his heart to have become worthy to suffer insults and contempt on that day for the name of the Lord, and desiring rather to be despised than applauded and praised by men.

In a short time another occasion of satisfying his

wish presented itself. Bernardine was again in Siena, walking through the streets with a companion, when some forward, ill-bred youths began to follow him, in order to jeer and make sport of him. To their scoffing words they added acts, throwing little stones at his heels, which were seen under his habit, as he purposely wore it short in order to feel the inconvenience of cold. The holy young man, without turning, or once showing any sign of angry emotions, pursued his walk as if he had been deaf and insensible. His companion, who was annoyed at the boys' impertinence, thinking that Bernardine perhaps had not noticed it, bid him remark what those insolent fellows were doing. But he received an answer worthy of Bernardine, and one which showed him to be a proficient in virtue, though but a novice in the habit. "Let them," he said, "do what they will, for they are helping us to gain eternal glory, in giving us matter for the exercise of patience, by means of which we possess our souls."

The year of his noviciate having been passed in the above-named exercises, and in proofs of singular virtue, the time finally arrived when Bernardine was admitted to his solemn profession. It was the same day of the year on which, in the previous year, he had entered the Order, the 8th of September; and on that day he was solemnly professed by the guardian of the humble convent of the Colombajo, promising to God, His glorious and most holy Mother Mary, and the seraphic S. Francis, to remain all his life in submission to the Rule of the Friars Minors, and to live in obedience and chastity, without possessing anything of his own. Such was the fervour and devotion which Bernardine manifested on this

occasion, that the few religious, who lived in the convent, were wonderfully edified, and full of spiritual joy.

CHAPTER X.

HE RECEIVES HOLY ORDERS, CELEBRATES HIS FIRST MASS, AND GIVES THE FIRST PROOF OF THE ZEAL WITH WHICH HE WAS FILLED FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

AFTER his profession, Bernardine, in whom the fire of divine love now burned yet brighter than before, tasted in the holy leisure of contemplation how sweet the Lord is, and studied with ever fresh anxiety the true method of becoming perfect in every kind of virtue. Humility, in particular, which is the only foundation of the spiritual building, was so dear to him that he did not venture to ask from his superiors anything that could turn to his own honour, so that obedience alone obliged him to become a cleric, and to receive holy orders.

He sang his first Mass solemnly on the 8th September, 1401, a day which had become memorable to him. After Mass he gave a short sermon in praise of our Blessed Lady, to the spiritual edification and comfort of all who heard him. With his daily approach to the sacred altar the flame of heavenly desires increased more and more in his heart, and, being touched more deeply by Divine love, he began to think what he might do, whilst living in this vale of tears, to please God more. He considered what Christ had done for the salvation of men, with how much

care He had endeavoured to draw them from sin, both by Himself and by means of apostles, martyrs, confessors, and many other zealous ministers. He reflected on the sufferings and labours which He had taken on Himself in order to excite men to penance, and induce them to amend their life, by example, holy teaching, and fervent discourses.

From these holy meditations, the young priest formed a most ardent desire of dedicating himself wholly to the gaining of souls, and undertaking the work of recalling them from their sins to penance. Under these feelings, Bernardine, being full of holy zeal, one day took up a large cross, and, carrying it on his bare shoulders in imitation of Christ, walked forward, accompanied by several devout friars, towards the small town of Sargiano, two miles distant from the city of Arezzo, the nearest inhabited spot to the Colombajo, where Bernardine was then living, with the intention of preaching penance.

On his arrival at Sargiano, he began to speak, not in the studied words of human wisdom, but in truthfulness of spirit, bearing himself as a true follower of his seraphic Father; and he produced such emotions in the minds of the people who heard him, that, although they judged him at first to be mad, in the end they all revered him as a man full of the love of God, and thirsting for the salvation of souls. It was the first time that Bernardine preached in public, being moved to do so by the fervour of his soul. Still, though he had shewn so ardent a zeal for the conversion of sinners, he durst not yet assume the office of preacher, nor even ask of his superiors leave to do so, for his humility made him acknowledge himself unequal to the exercise of this ministry.

Not long after this circumstance, in the year 1405, F. Antonio Angelo Piretto was chosen General of the Order. Being apprised of the virtues, singular devotion, eminent holiness, and rare acquaintance of Bernardine with the Holy Scriptures, he of his own accord ordered him to assume the office of public preacher. Bernardine was then, although so young, guardian of the little retreat of the Colombajo, and on receiving this commission, he was at first disturbed because of his humility, but as he discerned the will of God in obedience, he resigned himself, and seeing the field open for the execution of his fervent wishes, girded himself up for the work.

CHAPTER XI.

BERNARDINE BEGINS TO PREACH.—HE OBTAINS THE
HERMITAGE OF CAPRIOLA. — IS WONDERFULLY
CURED OF A HOARSENESS OF THE THROAT.

As soon as Bernardine was invested by his superiors with the power of publicly preaching the divine word, he began to practise his ministry, and to give the first promise of that fruit which, by his holy discourses, he was afterwards to gather in the vineyard of the Lord. Near the walls of Siena, outside the Porta Ovale, was the convent of S. Francis, of which mention was made in the seventh chapter, and near it the tree which may still be seen, planted by S. Francis. Taking advantage of the occasion of a feast of the Blessed Virgin when he happened to be in this convent, Bernardine was desirous of proving to his fellow citizens his love for them by delivering to them his second sermon, and for the first time he mounted a pulpit

in order to excite them to devotion towards the Queen of Heaven.

Another time, coming from the Colombajo to Siena, he happened to hit upon the day on which they were celebrating the feast of S. Onofrio (the 12th of June) in the little church and hermitage dedicated to that saint on the hill of Capriola, distant only one mile from the city. Bernardine saw a great number of people assembled, and his heart not permitting him to let them go with fasting souls from such a solemnity, he climbed into a tree that stood near, as the church could not contain the crowd, and preached with such spirit and energy that all present, learned and ignorant, were much edified, and greatly wondered at heart at this new preacher, although here also there were not wanting some few stubborn men who regarded him as a fool. The memory of this fact is to this day perpetuated by a painting on the spot.

On this occasion Bernardine remarked its agreeable and convenient situation, which greatly pleased him on account of its neighbourhood to the city, so that people might easily assemble to hear his sermons; and he asked the Rector of the hospital of S. Mary della Scala, to which this hermitage belonged, to give it up to himself and his companions, with the intention of establishing near his native place a house of strict observance on the model of the Colombajo. The governor, who was still John de Ghiandaroni, made no difficulty of granting Bernardine's request, recollecting well how much he had done in the hospital, five years before, for the victims of the plague, when that malady raged so fiercely in Siena. With the consent, therefore, of all the chapter of

the hospital, and the previous approval of apostolic authority, the Rector conceded to Bernardine and his poor friars the hermitage of Capriola, that they might there serve God in the rigorous observance of their rule, on condition of their offering to the hospital a pound of wax yearly on Lady-day in acknowledgment of the favour.

Bernardine, having thus obtained the hermitage of S. Onofrio, and been appointed its first guardian, began to arrange it according to the laws of poverty in the form of a convent, so as to be a fit dwelling for poor friars. He spared nothing for this object, subjecting himself to labour rather than command his inferiors, and carrying on his own shoulders loads of stones, timber, and materials necessary for the building. Nor in this alone, but also in the spiritual exercises of praying, fasting, watching, and other austerities, did he excel all, encouraging them by his example, and not failing meanwhile to provide for the sustenance of his poor family, by going out often to beg in the city, even after coming down from his pulpit on those days when the people of Siena came to Capriola.

Whilst Bernardine was attending to these matters, there were certain zealous religious who, with good intentions, endeavoured to persuade him that the office of preacher did not suit him, because as he was not of robust strength, but on the contrary, slight and delicate in form, he would never be able to perform on foot, according to the rule which he had professed, those long and painful journeys from city to city, and province to province, which would be necessary in preaching the word of God. Besides which, he had for many years been subject to a disorder of the throat, which by making him hoarse prevented

him from pronouncing his discourses clearly, and so as to be heard at a distance, and it seemed that such an obstacle ought to make him attend rather to contemplation than a life of action. The man of God, who was full of humility, agreed with their opinion, and would have desisted from the ministry which he had begun, if his conscience had not deterred him, for he could not, in times of such necessity, when souls were engulfed in every sort of sin and perished without number, refuse to assist them with his preaching and to labour for their salvation.

Still, feeling doubtful of what he ought to do, he had recourse to prayer with great fervour, and raising his eyes to heaven, he besought of God that if it were His Will that he should prosecute the work, He would deign to deliver him, through the intercession of His most holy Mother, from the inveterate malady of his throat which impeded his clear pronounciation. The favours which God has pre-ordained to grant to His elect are easily obtained, and His divine Providence has disposed that prayer should be the means of obtaining them. Bernardine, persevering in his request, saw in spirit as it were a fiery globe descend from heaven and settle near his throat, at the touch of which his old malady was banished, and he remained perfectly well. Feeling himself thus healed beyond all expectation, and seeing in the miracle the Divine Will which called him to persist in the ministry of preaching, he forthwith began to exert the same fervour in this work as he had before shown resignation under his perplexity.

CHAPTER XII.

STATE OF ITALY IN THE TIME OF S. BERNARDINE.—

HIS PARTICULAR EXERCISES IN PREPARING HIMSELF FOR THE CONVERSION OF SOULS.—HE GOES TO HEAR THE PREACHING OF S. VINCENT FERRER, WHO PROPHESES ABOUT HIM.

IN the fifteenth century Italy had been for a long time so completely deluged by a flood of corruption and iniquity, dissensions and crimes, as in appearance to have wholly lost its former fair aspect of piety and Christian manners. In every state of life, self-interest was master, and nothing was thought of but the increase of patrimony and every way of gaining riches, for which men practised fraud, extortion, and usury. The seas were infested with pirates, and the highways beleaguered by assassins. Men lived buried in licentiousness and sensual excesses. The monks were inclined to laxity, and no longer exhibited their early fervour and devotion. The ancient splendour of piety no longer flourished in the clergy, who were devoted to idleness, amusements, and worldly affairs. In other classes faith was not sound, there was no charity or modesty, whilst in morals all discipline was forgotten. Men were divided into two factions—the Guelphs, who supported the Church, and the Ghibellines, who were Imperialists; they displayed violent hatred of each other, exchanging reproaches and curses, and very frequently proceeding to deeds of blood, so that the horrible spectacle was exhibited of brothers rising up against their brothers, and murdering each other in the open streets for the cause of their opposite factions.

The lesson which parents impressed on their sons

was, that they should trust none of the hostile party, but should deem it an honour if ever they could succeed in destroying them. In short, there was no excess of barbarity, tyranny, and crime, that the one faction, inflamed with rage against the other, had not proved itself from time to time capable of perpetrating. In addition, great confidence was reposed in vain observances and superstitions. No one undertook any business, or began building a house without first observing the stars; and after the fashion of the Egyptians, days were observed with greater care than the laws of God. The world was full of magic and sorcery, and charms were employed to cure sickness, whilst holy and profane things were blended together in confusion.

People seldom attended church to hear Mass on feast-days. None of the sacraments were frequented, and many hardly confessed and communicated at the hour of death, while great numbers performed those duties only once in the year. The fear of those laws which prohibit games of chance was no longer felt, but gamblers resorted with impunity to the houses which stood open to them. Holidays were not distinguished from working days, except by the greater flocking of people to different kinds of shows and amusements; and the schism which for upwards of forty years had afflicted the Church, contributed much to all these evils.

Bernardine, who was informed both by his own experience and the accounts of others of the woful series of evils in which poor Italy was then involved, pitied her affliction with great sorrow of heart, and having placed all his confidence in God, felt himself desirous of flying everywhere in order to enlighten

and convert sinners by the divine word. He had not begun to set himself before the world, because his humility made him afraid that he was only capable of instructing, as he did, the common people of little farms and villages, employing a homely style of speech to adapt himself to their capacity, although he was gifted with great talents for preaching.

He preached, therefore, in Capriola and the neighbouring places at appointed hours in Advent and Lent, and on holidays; for the time was not yet come which was destined by God for the sound of that trumpet which He had chosen to resound through the land for the salvation of the people of Italy. In the meantime Bernardine, instructed by light from above, how blameless should be the life of those who preach to others, to the end that they destroy not by their acts what they say in words, and with what anxiety they ought to beg of God the conversion of those into whose ears they are to instil His word, did not fail to make himself every day more eminent in those two ways. Far from relaxing the severe course of life, to which the holy man of God had given himself from the first year of his noviciate, he now pursued it with greater fervour. The greater part of the night, after having recited matins in choir, was employed by him in study and holy meditation. He was very partial to quiet and solitary places, and often withdrawing himself to pray, he gave vent to his feelings in groans of sorrow, and striking his breast and face, he was bathed in tears of most tender devotion.

At times he accused himself of being a great sinner, at others he afflicted himself deeply for the injuries done to God by sinners, and implored Him to grant their amendment. Whilst engaged in the contempla-

tion of the bitter torments of our Redeemer, and of that infinite love with which He willed to shed all His most Precious Blood in an ignominious and dreadful death, he often stretched himself with his face on the ground in the form of a cross, crucifying himself with Christ crucified, not only in body by means of outward suffering, but also in spirit and mind by boundless grief and continual inward and severe mortification. Hence it was that in the private exhortations which he often made to his brethren, especially when he was superior, he did not cease to inculcate devout meditation on the Passion of Christ, as an inexhaustible source of benefits to the soul.

Whilst Bernardine was thus living in the small convent of Capriola, the great apostle of Spain, S. Vincent Ferrer, passed into Italy, and in the year 1408 was in Cisalpine Gaul, terrifying sinners by his wonderful discourses, and bringing them back to penance. The fame of this great preacher of the gospel, which had spread throughout the world, accompanied by the many wonderful facts which were everywhere reported concerning him, had reached Siena and come to the ears of Bernardine. He was then in the twenty-seventh year of his age, and being greatly desirous of hearing the Saint, as he hoped to learn from his discourses the manner of satisfying his own longings, he set out by sea from some port of Tuscany for Genoa, from whence he travelled inland, and arrived at Alessandria della Paglia, where S. Vincent was then preaching.

Alessandria is a city of Liguria, in Cisalpine Gaul, or, as it is now called, Lombardy, beyond the Po, almost half-way between Genoa on the east, and Turin on the west, and fifty-two miles from Milan.

It was erected into a cathedral city by Pope Alexander III., who gave it his name, it having formerly been called Cesarea. As soon as Bernardine entered the city, he went forthwith with the greatest eagerness to hear the holy man, and having listened with much admiration and astonishment to his eloquent teaching, which was united to a most fervent zeal, he visited him after the sermon, desiring to converse familiarly with him, and to be admitted to his friendship, in order to draw profit from his instructions and example. The holy youth was received with much kindness by S. Vincent, who quickly detected the beauty of his character, and desired him to stay to dine with him. Various were the subjects on which they discoursed together, and after receiving his blessing, Bernardine took his leave.

The next morning he again attended S. Vincent's preaching, and whilst he was standing with the rest of his hearers, the sainted preacher made an unexpected digression, and told all present that there stood amongst them a brother of the Minors, who would shortly become famous in all Italy, and would gather an abundant harvest in Christendom by his teaching and example. He said that, although the brother was young, and himself an old man, yet at a future time it would happen that this youth would be preferred in honour to himself by the Roman Church. He exhorted them, meanwhile, to be thankful to God for such a benefit, and to pray that He would condescend to perfect for the good of Christian people the design which had been revealed to him, adding, that since it was to be so, he should return to preach in France and Spain, leaving this new preacher to instruct and enlighten the rest of the Italians, whom he had not yet taught.

Having said this, the holy orator, who had been inspired by divine light, returned to the thread of his discourse.

The accomplishment of this prophecy, even to the minutest point, will appear from the following history.

END OF BOOK I.

BOOK II.

BOOK II.

THE RESULTS OF S. BERNARDINE'S MISSION IN LOMBARDY, THE VENETIAN STATES, AND TUSCANY.

CHAPTER I.

OCCUPATIONS OF S. BERNARDINE AFTER HIS RETURN FROM ALESSANDRIA.—GOD DECLARES TO HIM HIS WILL THAT HE SHOULD PREACH IN LOMBARDY.

THE fervent desire of Bernardine to imitate the zeal of S. Vincent Ferrer, after conferring with that apostolic man in Alessandria, led him, on his return into Tuscany, to carry his preaching beyond the limits to which his humility had hitherto confined it. He no longer employed his talents in treating only with the simple villagers around Siena, but began to go from city to city, although always within the confines of Tuscany. He continued to preach in this manner for nearly ten years, although not frequently nor in the principal churches, and with results no greater than are usually gathered by preachers who employ themselves in the ministry in the holy seasons of Advent and Lent.

Whilst he was thus engaged, he also attended with extreme care to the greater advance of the regular Observance, which, being still in its cradle, met with opposition and spread but little, although our Saint greatly contributed to its defence, promotion, and

establishment by his prudence, example, and teaching. He was appointed at different times guardian of the various places which this little flock then possessed in Tuscany, and in which mortification, love of poverty, and study of prayer flourished so highly, that the neighbours were moved to compunction of heart, and many asked to be admitted to this angelic, rather than human, manner of life.

Amongst these postulants was Brother Albert Berdini, born at Garziano, in the diocese of Chiusi, in Tuscany, the native place of Pope Pius III. Attracted by the holy life of Bernardine, and his companions and disciples, this friar, after having lived in religion for ten years with very little fervour, passed to the new Congregation of Observance in the year 1415. It fell to S. Bernardine's lot to receive him, and to gather into his fold this sheep, who was one day to render it great services and honour, and the Saint recommended him to the care of a certain Fra Angelo of Civitella, in the district of Arezzo, a lay-brother, but of such innocent manners and heavenly doctrine, that he subjected this great man to the severest discipline, and became the director of his soul.

Such were the occupations of Bernardine at that time, for as his name was only known in some few places, the great gifts which he had received from God for preaching were equally unknown. But the time was approaching when God would make manifest to the world that He had given His servant a voice of power, by despatching Bernardine as a new apostle to preach beyond Tuscany, and to carry His name everywhere for the salvation of the people of Italy.

This happened in the following manner :—Bernar-

dine, about the year 1417, being guardian of the first convent which had introduced the Minor Observance into Tuscany in 1399, had admitted to the religious habit a canon regular of S. Frediano, of Lucca. This is the convent of Fiesole, an ancient city on a hill two miles from Florence, which is now, with the exception of the Bishop's Palace, some monasteries, and a few buildings, almost entirely destroyed. The rigour of poverty and penance in which the occupants of this house lived from the time of its founders was very great; and hence these holy religious enjoyed great esteem, and excited a general desire in all who were acquainted with their life, to imitate their virtues. Lovers of poverty beyond expression, they passed their lives under great restrictions. The habits which they wore were of rough cloth and patched; their food consisted of a little bread and a scanty measure of water. Only the more aged drank wine at the direction of the guardian, and a small measure sufficed them all for fifteen days, there being but few who would even taste it, and none who made it their drink. They left the convent very seldom, and when occasion required them to do so, such was their modesty, that wise mothers would call their daughters to look at them, and to learn from the religious how to walk with modesty and composure.

The above-mentioned canon, whilst performing his noviciate in this holy place, where he had gained the love of his saintly superior by his virtues and spirit of contemplation, was one night in prayer after Matins, when he was wrapt in ecstasy, and full of holy fervour, began to walk about the convent crying out aloud, "Brother Bernardine, do not keep the talents which God has given you buried any longer; go and

preach in Lombardy ;" and he repeated this for the two following nights, so that the good religious, disturbed and angry at this freak, did their best by persuasions and threats to induce him to be quiet, but all in vain, for the novice excused himself by saying that he could not help himself, but was obliged to speak thus.

Bernardine, on his return from Florence, where he had been for some days preaching for the first time the praises of the most holy Name of Jesus to the people of that city, who were accustomed to pronounce it idly, and to outrage it by cursing, was informed of what had been so strangely intimated to him by the mouth of the novice, and instantly ordered his brethren, and begged all whom he knew to be dear to God as well in religion as in the world, to intercede by their prayers with the Father of Lights, that His Will might be manifested more plainly.

In this too, Bernardine was the faithful follower of his seraphic Father, who, when doubting whether he was to confine himself to preaching within the confines of Umbria, or to proceed to other countries, had humble recourse to the counsels and prayers of S. Clare and her sisters, and of the Blessed Father Sylvester, to clear up his uncertainty of the Almighty's Will. Bernardine having at last ascertained by many signs, and by the voice of God which guided him interiorly, that such was His pleasure, turned without delay to the country to which he was called, and in order to arrive with greater speed in Lombardy, he probably travelled by sea, sailing on some vessel from one of the ports of Tuscany to Genoa.

CHAPTER II.

BERNARDINE'S JOURNEY THROUGH LOMBARDY.—HE ARRIVES AT MILAN, AND PREACHES IN THAT CITY.—HIS NAME BEGINS TO BE KNOWN, AND HE IS VERY SUCCESSFUL.

CONSTANCE, a free city on the confines of Switzerland, was at this time the scene of the famous council, in which peace was restored to the Church, and the schism terminated by the election of Otho Cardinal Colonna to the Papacy under the title of Martin V. When our Saint arrived at Genoa, he remained there, we may suppose, for some days, and during his stay he happened to discover a heretic who was respected by the common people as a saint. He was called John Vodadeo, and clothed in undressed skins, giving out that he was many years past the average duration of life. By these and similar pretences he attracted the notice and devotion of the people, who ran in crowds to see him; one of the citizens, too, had often received him into his house with great honour as a man of singular goodness. Bernardine was invited by some people to go with them in quest of this person, and complied; but after a short stay, perceiving that the man was full of wine, he said that he wished to withdraw to say his Office. Meantime the smell of the wine spread so as to be sensible to all the bystanders, and the hypocrite, finding himself discovered, fled with all haste, for if he had waited, S. Bernardine, who had discovered his wickedness, would have caused him to be burnt.

Continuing his journey, he arrived at last at Milan, a most noble and ancient city of Lombardy beyond

the Po, which was the place destined by God for the triumph of His mighty word in the mouth of His servant Bernardine. Moved by the spirit which animated him, and which had impelled him to undertake this long journey, the Saint there began his mission, preaching in the churches according to custom on holidays only, and with great earnestness of desire to enlighten these people and teach them the way of salvation.

At first few came to hear him, because the Milanese did not look on him as more than any ordinary preacher. By degrees, however, his sermons began to please now one, now another ; so that a good old teacher, whose school was frequented by many youths of distinction, having heard Bernardine, never failed afterwards to attend his sermons, taking with him several of his pupils, to whom he said : " Let us go, my children, to hear this good friar, who is dressed in a mean and ragged habit, but who has so much grace and eloquence in speaking, such a good method of instruction, and such majesty of words and phrases, that I have never heard his equal." Thus God proceeded to manifest gradually the talents which He had given to Bernardine in order to advance the interests of His glory ; and as he daily gave greater pleasure to the population of Milan, and some of the wisest and most learned of them began to conceive a great esteem and veneration for him, he was finally commanded, after having passed some months there, to preach the Lent, which was just beginning. It was the year 1418, fourteen years since the time when, without any personal fame, he had gone about the country and towns of Tuscany scattering the divine word with scanty fruit, and ten years after S. Vincent Ferrer had pro-

phesied of him in Alessandria. As soon as S. Bernardine opened his lips on the first day of Lent, the people opened their ears to listen, their minds to know him, and their hearts to revere him. He surpassed every one's expectation, and his name was spoken of everywhere, for all admired his zeal and eloquence, and considered him a new apostle sent from heaven.

A circumstance which happened at his first sermon, served to confirm the good opinion which people had formed of him, and to obtain for him their veneration. He had made some progress in his discourse, when he stopped suddenly in the midst of his speech, and paused without saying a word, like one who was contemplating some great event; then without adding anything, he came down from the pulpit thoughtfully and in silence. His companions, wondering at this novel proceeding, asked him the cause of this unusual interruption of his sermon. To their first enquiry the Saint made no answer, being deterred by humility from explaining the true cause, but on their pressing him, he at last told them that God had revealed to him the death of his cousin Tobia, whom he had always regarded as a mother, and that he had seen her soul at that moment, winging its flight to heaven.

The fame of this revelation presently spread through the city of Milan, and reached the ears of the Duke, Philip Mary Visconti, who, to acquaint himself with the truth, at once and without speaking to any one, despatched a courier to Siena to obtain correct information of the fact. The truth of Bernardine's words was confirmed, Tobia having expired at the very hour when the man of God broke off the

thread of his discourse to watch in an ecstasy the passage of his cousin's soul to glory.

The Duke was thus satisfied of the truth of what had happened to the preacher, and the story having passed from mouth to mouth through the whole city, Bernardine began to be held by the people as a Saint. From that time they went in crowds with the greatest eagerness to hear him, and wonderful was the power of his words upon their hearts to induce them to lay aside their vices, change their conduct, and detest their sins with a true repentance. Great and numerous were the conversions during Lent, of every kind of sinners. With the renunciation of former jealousies, many enmities and strifes which had been frequent in this populous city, especially between the factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines, were now laid aside and extinguished. Usurers made restitution, and were no longer seen practising their trade; the formerly dissolute youth no longer frequented infamous and suspicious haunts. Respect was again manifested towards the churches; the people visited them with greater frequency, and in such crowds, that the confessors could hardly supply the spiritual necessities of the multitudes that flocked to them. By careful observation made by the parish priests and their assistants, it was found that men spontaneously and willingly came to the sacrament of penance in greater numbers in one year than had formerly approached the holy tribunal in the course of ten. Women, laying aside their vanities, were now seen dressed with propriety; gamblers, throwing away their cards and dice, fled from their old haunts as the scene of every mischief; and many noble and gentle youths, animated by the holy preaching of Bernardine to despise the

vanity of the world, turned to God and entered various orders, thus encouraging Bernardine to augment his little flock by the erection of a greater number of convents.

Bernardine having gathered this fair fruit of his labours with boundless joy of heart, and being much pleased with the docility and honourable attentions of the Milanese, promised that he would return the following Lent, in order to strengthen and establish their souls still further by the divine word in the good way upon which they had entered ; meanwhile he desired to follow the example of his divine Master in carrying the Gospel to other cities, as we shall presently see.

CHAPTER III.

THE GIFTS OF S. BERNARDINE IN THE MINISTRY OF PREACHING.—THE METHOD WHICH HE COMMONLY OBSERVED, AND THE GREAT FRUIT WHICH HIS PREACHING BORE.

GOD having destined S. Bernardine to be a vessel of election to carry His Name to the people of Italy, and to excite them powerfully to venerate it, to correct their depraved morals, and to bring them to sincere repentance, further adorned his soul with those gifts and graces which were necessary for the success of this good work. Some of those who had the happiness of hearing S. Bernardine, have written of him that by his natural gifts only, he practised all that masters of oratory teach with regard to elocution. His voice was

agreeable, clear, sonorous, deep, powerful, and efficacious; it preserved gravity in its sweetness, and sweetness in its power, and was modulated in clear and easy tones; indeed he adapted it so well to the matter of his discourse, and rendered it so flexible that, directing it with ease whither and in what manner he pleased, he surpassed all in grace and elocution.

Nor was he less an adept in moving men's minds, and shaping them to his pleasure; insomuch that whether he thundered from the pulpit in tremendous denunciations of vice, or whether he sweetly exhibited the beauty of virtue, or recreated the minds of his hearers with some witty, though always reverent, remark to obtain a closer attention, he was ever master of their feelings, moving them with surprising art at one time to tears, at another to smiles. When he reproved any vice, he made every one feel detestation of it; when he commended any virtue, all were made to love it. His natural appearance served to make these powers more remarkable. He was of middle height, but erect in bearing, of a ruddy countenance, which expressed at once gravity and cheerfulness of spirit, fine features, and a venerable aspect. His gestures were most appropriate, and ever suited to the matter which he was explaining.

But the elegance of his language and gestures was inferior to the admirable knowledge which he revealed. Being gifted with a correct understanding of doctrine, he explained it from the pulpit with soundness and fruit, taking as the ground-work of his exposition the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers, and the canons of the Christian faith; he possessed also an acquaintance with divers other sources of knowledge, particularly with history. Aided by these materials, but far

more by the holiness of his life and the special grace by which he was directed, God confirming the words of His servant by miracles, our Saint rendered himself famous throughout Italy, and won such favour that his hearers appeared to hang on his lips, and were lost in admiration of this new apostle of God. He walked barefoot, dressed in a poor woollen habit; lived in the greatest love of poverty and enmity to money; appeared emaciated with fasting and labours; was assiduous in prayer, straightforward in his dealings, of the most innocent purity, full of piety and mercy; in a word, so blameless in every act and word, that nothing was ever found in him deserving of reproof, and nothing ever known to sully the brightness of his soul. All these qualities, which shewed how perfectly his works corresponded to his words, wonderfully attracted people, and increased their belief in what he said.

The words of Bernardine, at once simple and ardent, were of such force that they pierced the inmost heart, and divided soul and spirit. Whithersoever he went, countless crowds of both sexes and of every age, the poor and the great, loved, revered, and exalted him with the highest praises. Receiving his words as so many divine oracles, they pressed to hear him with the greatest zeal. Numbers of men and women assembled before daybreak in the public squares where he was wont to preach, to secure a convenient place before the throng of people arrived; and a great multitude, both of religious and secular persons, flocked in to hear him from the surrounding country, often taking journeys of more than thirty miles for the purpose. Fathers carried their children upon their shoulders; infants hung from their mothers' necks; and none

thought anything of the fatigue of a long journey, or of the weariness and hunger which they were obliged to endure, so long as they could contrive to hear the Saint, for their spiritual cravings far exceeded their bodily wants, and every discomfort was made agreeable by the fervent attention with which they listened to the words that issued from the gracious mouth of the servant of God.

This was the method he usually followed in the exercise of the Apostolic ministry. Every morning, before ascending the pulpit, he celebrated the holy Sacrifice of the Mass with his soul lifted up in God, generally using a portable altar, such as was allowed in that age, in the very squares in which he was about to preach to the assembled multitude. When in the pulpit, he did not apply himself indifferently to any subject, but being endowed with the greatest prudence, he sought out first with wise discernment what was the conduct and disposition of the people of the district, and what sort of vices reigned in each of them ; and after thus imitating those versed in the art of healing the body, this great physician of the soul's diseases applied the remedies which his patients' disorders respectively needed. He brought about the amendment of sinners, but in such a manner that in reproving their vices, the vicious never found themselves provoked to hatred, and in declaiming against crime, its very authors remained obliged to him, from his ever adapting his corrections to the occasion, having regard to the condition and state of persons ; so that whilst he was in truth the cause of infinite good in Christendom, it was never noticed that the smallest scandal resulted from his words.

God gave to His servant the spirit of compunction,

so that in preaching with a supernatural fervour he softened the hardest hearts, and when he exhorted the people to appease the anger of God by means of fasts and tears, men who for many years had remained aloof from the sacraments, might be seen making their confession with true contrition and great sorrow for their sins, and afterwards approaching the holy communion. On holidays and great feasts, when the concourse of people was always greater, Bernardine was careful to avoid any well-arranged discourse ; but wishing to satisfy many different tastes, and to draw profit from them all, he passed from one subject to another, as though collecting matter rather than dispensing it. Yielding to his naturally joyous temperament, he occasionally introduced some amusing thought into his gravest sentences, with the object of refreshing by this sweet food the weary minds of his hearers, and of fastening their attention, as his sermons lasted for three hours. In this way he illuminated the dark minds of his audience with the light of truth, and gained them over to God. Lastly, it was his practice to show the people at the end of his sermons the most holy Name of Jesus, painted with his own hand on a little frame, in a cypher of three letters, in characters of gold, and surrounded by rays like the sun, and then exciting them to the adoration of this Name, he made them beg our Lord for mercy, and animated all, in virtue of this Name in which our salvation lies, to be diligent in obtaining it.

To describe the rich and abundant harvest which S. Bernardine gathered by traversing all Italy for so many years, is almost impossible. Of the innumerable cities and villages of that land, there was not one, however torn by implacable hatreds and intestine

strife, that he did not reduce to Christian tranquillity. Private enmities without number, which had been fomented for many years, and were cruelly kept up between different citizens in various provinces and districts, frequently producing contentions and slaughter, were abandoned at the voice of the Saint; so that the hateful names of Guelph and Ghibelline were no longer heard, their impious factions were extirpated and brought to a Christian peace, and their fatal symbols being effaced everywhere by the Saint's order, the most holy Name of Jesus was carved or painted in their stead. Young men and women were seen to despise the effeminate world in which they had lived, to return to the laws of Christian honour and modesty, and to frequent the churches and the sacraments in place of their former resorts. Holidays were now kept in conformity with the commands of the sacred canons, nor were the servile employments, which abuse had introduced, any longer performed on those days.

Bernardine inculcated with great ardour veneration and respect to sacred buildings and to priests. Many poor and honourable young women were married on the dowries which the holy preacher's rich converts presented to them. Women of bad life were reclaimed in great numbers by his sermons, and with the help of public funds, placed in security, or married. Great was the number of those who gave up the evil habit of cursing and blaspheming, in consequence of Bernardine's having eradicated from their hearts the detestable vice of gambling. How many adulteries, thefts, murders, and other crimes did he not cause to cease! Men might be seen burning those instruments of the enemy, cards, dice, and gaming-tables,

in heaps in the public squares, as well as the effeminate ornaments of perfumes, paint, false hair, vain trinkets, masks and looking-glasses, or again, writings concerning the black art, characters expressing the name of the devil, superstitious compositions, and the like. At the formidable sound of Bernardine's words, the demon lost the tyrannical sway which for so many years he had exercised over countless souls, and the fervour of Christian piety flourished more and more amongst men. Hospitals were erected ; usury, fraud, and mercantile deceit ceased, and thieves, pirates, and the wrongful owners of the property of others, being converted by Bernardine, restored their ill-gotten goods, sometimes to the amount of more than a thousand ducats of gold. Through him, widows and orphans regained their possessions whole and entire. Many, even Jews and heretics, were reclaimed by this new apostle of Italy, so that, enlightened by his aid to know the truth, they laid aside their perfidy, abjured their errors, and were received through the waters of baptism into the bosom of the Catholic Church.

New convents, both of men and women, were everywhere founded, and many more which had fallen from observance were reformed by his preaching, and became the abodes of a host of sacred virgins, who day and night served the Lord with fidelity. Numbers, both noble and delicate youths, and wealthy old men, left all things for the love of God, and repaired to the cloisters of various orders. Of the many new monasteries, a large part was devoted to the Franciscans, called Observantines, from their strictly following the rigour of S. Francis' rule ; many new convents too, raised by the charity of the faithful, and the labours

of Bernardine, were filled with pious women, who kept the severe institute of the original rule of S. Clare. He also greatly increased the third order of S. Francis, many gentlemen, nobles, and devout ladies living under this rule in their own houses, and bringing forth fruits worthy of penance. Indeed it is impossible to give a complete and distinct account of the conversions of sinners of every age, condition, and sex which Bernardine effected, or of the good fruit and fervour which was produced in the course of the many years of his preaching to the people of Italy. Something, however, will be gathered from the narrative we shall give of the particular actions and fruitful labours of his holy life; for the present it will suffice to conclude this chapter by remarking the verification of the two prophecies made to S. Bernardine, one by S. Vincent Ferrer at Alessandria, and the other by his first master, P. John Ristori, of venerable repute in Siena, for it seemed that by means of his preaching the Christian religion sprang up afresh in that age in Italy.

CHAPTER IV.

BERNARDINE GOES TO PREACH IN LIGURIA.—FIRST SEEDS OF A FIERCE PERSECUTION.

BERNARDINE, having thus happily terminated his first Lenten course, and greatly enhanced the weight and reputation of his name at Milan, passed into Liguria to preach to its people. It is a country of Italy which lies partly on the sea coast and partly inland. The former part comprises Genoa and its sea board,

and the inland portion, which forms upper Lombardy, and belongs to Cisalpine Gaul, comprehends Montfer-rato, great part of Piedmont, and part of the duchy of Milan. The holy preacher no longer confined his ministry to particular seasons, as before, but preached every day, while so great was the enthusiasm and honour which he met with everywhere, and such the attention with which the people hung upon his words, that everything seemed to revive under the fruitful labours of the Saint.

Whilst he was traversing the inland districts of this province, everywhere uniting discordant spirits in peace, and rooting out mischievous factions by his influence, there occurred a circumstance which became the occasion of a fierce persecution against him. An opinion had taken hold of the men of that day in Liguria that Antichrist was already born, and would soon appear in the world; and this notion passed from Liguria into Tuscany to the holy hermits who lived in that country, as well as into Venice and other parts. It was based on the great authority of S. Vincent Ferrer, who was famous for the glory of countless miracles and of astounding conversions which he had wrought by his preaching. In his sermons S. Vincent was wont to terrify sinners by announcing the last judgment as now at hand, and in a letter (which, however, was misunderstood) written by him in 1412 to Peter de Luna, whom he acknowledged as Pope Benedict XIII., S. Vincent insisted with great energy that Antichrist was then nine years old.

Brother Manfred of Vercelli, a man of venerable life, as he is styled by S. Antoninus, and much esteemed for his learning, undertook to defend this opinion, both before and after the death of S. Vincent, and to advo-

cate it so warmly, that he taught it to be lawful for husbands and wives to leave one another, in order to secure themselves from the imminent danger of losing their souls in the approaching persecution of Antichrist. By the terrors of this doctrine, which he confirmed by the authority of the Apocalypse, he induced many of both sexes, young and old, single and married, to leave the world and put on the habit of the third order of penance of S. Dominic. He thus collected together more than a hundred men and three hundred women, of the simple people of Lombardy, who were ready to follow him, as they soon after did at his call, in order to fly from the persecution of Antichrist, under the assurance that all who did so would persevere in their faith.

The first news of this was given to S. Bernardine whilst he was preaching at Castelnovo, near Tortona, by B. Vincent of Siena, his faithful companion, and a friar of learning and piety. This good brother, being asked by a married lady of rank whether it was lawful to make a vow to a certain monk of Asti who supplied the place of B. Manfred, that she would follow him in order to fly from the persecutions of Antichrist, B. Vincent plainly answered that such a step was not lawful without the consent of her husband, and much more so against his wish. This decision excited against him the anger of some persons, who asserted that the Holy Ghost, the Author of marriage, might dissolve it, because of the imminent danger to salvation.

Some days later, Bernardine, going to preach at Tortona, and from thence passing to Alessandria, chanced to meet a Dominican Inquisitor, and to converse with him about the report he had heard at Castel-

nuovo of the new sect of B. Manfred, and besides finding that this father was already informed of it, our Saint further learnt that his companion had communicated his opinion by letter to B. Manfred, especially with regard to the two points of the coming of Antichrist, and the divorce of married persons, which he asserted to be lawful in the emergency; but that from this communication no profit had resulted. S. Bernardine did not then oppose this erroneous opinion publicly, although perhaps urged to do so by his zeal for the truth, but awaited fuller information. Whilst he was preaching one day on the excellence of the holy Name of Jesus, he gave the cypher containing it to a child for the purpose of applying it to a possessed woman, who remained at once free from the assaults of the evil spirit.

Continuing his journey, the Saint arrived in Piedmont, and preached in some of the towns. It is particularly recorded that in the city of Ivrea, Bernardine was at first rejected by the inhabitants, who would not even listen to him, as he preached in the public streets and highways, but that at last, finding him to be truly a servant of God, from his having passed over the river Dora on his cloak, he obtained a ready hearing, and at the request of the citizens received from the magistrates a little plot beyond the city for his brethren, who afterwards dedicated it to Bernardine's honour, when he was enrolled in the catalogue of the saints.

Whatever may be the truth of this story, we know that the Saint, leaving the interior of Liguria, of which Piedmont forms a large part, advanced into the maritime country. He preached in Albenga, then in Savona, and visited all the Genoese sea-coast, teaching

the natives to lead a Christian life in the firm observance of the divine law ; nor was there an estate, castle, or village through which he passed, either in going or returning, where he was not received with entreaties to comfort souls and instruct them with his sweet and powerful words, so marvellously had the esteem and veneration of his person been spread. We may suppose that at this time he preached in Vercelli, and as Pope Martin V. tarried in that city after passing the Alps on the confines of Savoy, and arrived in Piedmont towards the end of September, Bernardine may have presented himself at his Holiness' feet to honour the new and lawful Vicar of Jesus Christ.

The Saint at last leaving Liguria, arrived at Pavia, a very ancient and famous city of Lombardy, once the seat of the Lombard kings, situate beyond the Po, near the river Ticino. He was received by the inhabitants with the affection and devotion which his sanctity merited, nor did he fail to effect his usual conversions amongst them by his sermons. He there contracted a close friendship with Cato Sacco, a very famous lawyer of those times ; for the holiness, learning, and agreeable manners of Bernardine rendered him not only pleasing and venerable to the people, but welcome and dear to people of rank and letters also. It is probable that Bernardine preached the Advent at Pavia, after which, as the time approached for redeeming the promise he had given the year before to the Milanese, he returned to their city to preach his second Lent.

CHAPTER V.

BERNARDINE PREACHES A SECOND LENTEN COURSE
AT MILAN. — HIS MEMORABLE ACTIONS AT THIS
TIME.

IT is impossible to describe the ardour with which the Milanese desired the return of Bernardine, or the joy with which they received him. It seemed, on his arrival, as if the whole city had poured out its numberless population to meet him. He began to preach, and, as in the preceding Lent he had spoken of love in every sermon, teaching them that they should love God, he now devoted his discourses to the illustration of that point, in order that those whom he had taught to love might have their minds enlightened as to the method of rendering their love more steadfast and fervent. Amongst the number of those who remained deeply moved at his preaching at Monza, an important town ten miles from Milan, in which the Emperors received the iron crown, was a certain gentleman named Christopher, a brave soldier and favourite of the Duke Philip, whom he served with twelve horsemen. This man, feeling the movements of divine grace, which called him to the contempt of vanities and worldly greatness, yet ignorant how to act, enquired of S. Bernardine whether it was more conducive to his salvation to enter into religion, or to serve the Duke his master; and having been answered by the Saint that it was better to serve God than any king or emperor, without demur put himself at once into the hands of the servant of God, praying to be admitted into his order.

S. Bernardine received him with great joy, and having carefully scrutinised his life and conduct, and acquainted him with the contents of the rule of S. Francis, its severity and method of life, gave him the gospel counsel that if he would be perfect, he should go and sell all that he had and give it to the poor, and then come and follow Christ. Instructed by the divine light, the gentleman readily undertook to execute this precept. The Saint, rejoicing to hear so prompt a reply, with his wonted kindness took him by the hand, telling him to go and do cheerfully what he had said, because he would thus become a great servant of God. As Bernardine touched his hand, the gentleman felt such warmth and fervour of devotion, that it seemed to him, as he afterwards said, that both his hand and arm up to the heart were on fire. Having skilfully extricated himself with the greatest possible speed from every earthly tie, he was admitted to the Observantine Order by S. Bernardine according to the faculties granted to him the year before by Martin V., and was named brother Christopher of Monza. He afterwards became, according to S. Bernardine's prediction, a perfect religious, and a most learned preacher. He built a convent at Como, called Santa Croce di Boscaglia, and at last, full of good works, piously ended his life at Milan in 1460, in the convent of S. Mary of the Angels, in which house he lies buried. S. John Capistran, in the Legend in which he relates this history, says that he had heard, not without astonishment, from this servant of God, that whilst he was yet living in the profession of war, for more than ten years he had never stained himself with the

vice of lust, nor with gaming at cards or dice, nor had ever pronounced in vain the name of God or of any Saint—a circumstance which, rare as it is in members of that profession, increases the glory of Bernardine in having won so worthy a man to a more perfect life.

S. Bernardine performed another memorable action during this Lent, or rather confirmed what he had begun in the previous year. He was accustomed, after having preached to the people, to go and preach likewise to nuns, when he was invited by them. In this way he came to a certain convent called S. Mary's, and, having found that the nuns had fallen from their first fervour, and lived in great relaxation, on account of the carelessness of their directors, who were men void of all spiritual feeling, and full of worldliness, he undertook, by the sweetness and power of his language, to induce them to lead a more chastened and religious life, and fully succeeded in the attempt; leaving them with wholesome directions, and assigning as their spiritual guides friars of his own Observance. The Saint further discovered that these nuns wore the habit of S. Clare without observing her rule, and that the convent had been at its foundation instituted under the rule of S. Augustine; he therefore persuaded them to lay aside the latter rule, which indeed they did not observe, and thenceforward to live under the first and strict rule of the order of S. Clare. After the Saint's death, the friars of S. Angelo, whom he had appointed their directors, supposing that the convent did not really belong to S. Clare's rule, wished to leave it. The nuns had recourse to Pope Eugenius IV., but it fell to his successor, Nicolas V., to relieve them, by suppressing the rule and

institute of S. Augustine, commanding them to live according to the rule of S. Clare, and obliging the friars to direct them. On this occasion they changed the name of the convent, and, in remembrance of the great benefit which they had received from S. Bernardine, gave it his name. In this house, which became the abode of many religious of saintly life, is shown the pulpit from which the Saint used to preach to the people, and a cloak belonging to him, with which wonderful cures have been wrought. The nuns live under the rule of S. Clare, as mitigated by Urban IV., and as they own some property, particularly the house of Cantalupo, from which the convent takes its name, they are commonly called, not the Sisters, but the Ladies of S. Bernardine.

But to return to the holy preacher. The citizens of Milan had observed, even in the former Lent, that many youths, mostly of distinguished birth, attracted from every quarter by the powerful doctrine and holy life of Bernardine, left their parents and the world, and begged admission into his order. As their number increased, the Milanese consulted together, and resolved to erect a handsome convent in which they might live, and practise their observance freely. They offered S. Bernardine a plot distant a mile from the city, near the second fosse, between the Porta Nuova and that on the road to Como. It was a small house, which could hold fifteen persons, with a little church attached to it, and belonged to the rector and canons of S. Maria Falcorina. This little hermitage and church was called S. Angelo. The Saint willingly accepted the gift, and being much pleased with the name of S. Angelo, he ordered that as these good citizens were then raising a beautiful new church

and capacious convent, it should be called of S. Mary of the Angels, after the convent near Assisi, which five years previously had passed into the possession of the Observantines. The convent then was erected on that spot; it was sufficiently large to contain a hundred cells, and so beautiful as to be called the Paradise of Milan. It existed till the year 1551, when Ferdinand Gonzaga, Governor of the whole of the Milanese territory for the Emperor Charles V., fearing lest it might serve the enemy for a post whence to annoy the city, pulled it down; but another was raised within the city by the liberality of the citizens, the same ample and magnificent structure which still exists.

To return, however, to earlier days. When the convent was established, S. Bernardine caused friars to be sent from the provinces of Umbria and Tuscany, to govern the house, and teach the novices. Amongst them came, as guardian, one Brother Lanceslaus, of the royal blood of Hungary, a man of holy life, and enriched by God with particular gifts. S. Bernardine having arranged everything, left Milan, to the great sorrow of all who saw themselves deprived of the presence of the father of their souls, and set out on his journey towards Bergamo, to which town he had been summoned, preaching on the road wherever he stopped, to the few persons who gave him lodging; a practice which he always followed in travelling. Whenever the Saint happened to be in Lombardy, and not far from Milan, he did not forget to visit a city which he so warmly loved.

CHAPTER VI.

S. BERNARDINE PREACHES IN BERGAMO, IN THE VAL SERIANA, COMO, AND TREVIGLIO. HE BEGINS PUBLICLY TO OPPOSE B. MANFRED.

THE detestable disorder of Guelph and Ghibelline factions which had infected so many towns and places of Lombardy, appears to have planted in Bergamo and its district its principal seat. In this town greater cruelties were practised than elsewhere, and so devoted were the people to the prejudices of party, that, not satisfied with erecting its badges on the tops of houses, gates, walls, towns, and palaces, they even introduced them into the churches, stamping them on the chalices, sacred vestments, altars, and tombs. Some too, as they had ranged the very beasts whose forms resembled their symbols on one side or the other, assigned a party meaning even to trees and flowers,—to olives, oaks, willows, and other trees, to red and white roses, and even to the forms of drinking-glasses, and to apples, peaches, and other fruit. Others blindly imagined that the Church was Guelph, and regarded some of the Saints as Guelph, others as Ghibelline; nay, men had been found so impious as to announce as belonging to their party the very God of everlasting peace.

S. Bernardine, having entered this city, and found so large a crop of evil to be rooted out, employed in that work all the energy and zeal of his soul. He cried aloud in accents of thunder, in order to represent to the factions the terrible losses to which their party prejudices exposed them, to enable their blinded

understandings to perceive their inexcusable grossness of conduct, which rather belonged to beasts than men, and to make them understand that as the devil was the head of these divisions, they would infallibly be brought down by final impenitence to his fellowship in hell. By such discourses he converted thousands who, from being enemies, became most faithful friends of God, and he brought back the people of Bergamo to their former praiseworthy fashion of living in Christian good-will. In order to ensure the permanence of this feeling, as well as to remove everything that could disturb it, or recall past recollections, he caused the fatal badges to be taken down and effaced from the houses, gates, walls, churches, and tombs, exhorting the people to engrave or paint in their place the most holy Name of Jesus, the Author of peace.

Whilst he preached in Bergamo, S. Bernardine lived in the convent of S. Francis, formerly called S. John Baptist, a little beyond the city walls; for it was his practice to betake himself to such convents as these, where there were none of the Observance. A citizen of the name of Peter Alsano, moved by devotion to the holy preacher, and not finding then the means of founding a new convent of the Observance (which was, however, erected soon after), in consideration of the Saint's merits, gave to the convent of S. Francis, which was an inconvenient one, another small house and some land, for its greater extension and comfort.

The happy success of S. Bernardine in the city of Bergamo rendered the people of the valleys which lie within its territory extremely desirous to hear him, and they invited the man of God to visit several

places in that district. Bernardine, whose heart burned with zeal for the salvation of souls, was nothing daunted by the hardships of the journey, in which he had to cross many mountains of the Alpine range bare-foot, and willingly granted their request. He was everywhere received as an apostle of God, and heard with such attention that the people repented of their sins, corrected their lives, and, being rendered sensible of the serious evils of faction, agreed to renounce them sincerely, and to live in peace, after having for many years maintained the most terrible discord.

As the Saint was journeying in the province of Bergamo, he arrived at Clusone, a large and populous place, which is the chief village of the Val Seriana. As he stopped there for some days to preach, it happened that a mountaineer died not far from the village, and that, three days after his burial, the voice of a spirit was heard in his house, which pretended to be the soul of the deceased, and promised to discover to the head of the family a great treasure, if he would follow its direction. It is the chief effort of the malignant spirits to draw down into the eternal misery which has been allotted them for their pride, as many companions as possible, and they easily succeed when they contrive to insinuate themselves into the minds of unwary people, by attracting to themselves, with the vain hope of great gain, the honour which is due only to God. But the prudent ministers of Christ, who know the fraudulent arts of Satan, prevent the promises of these lying spirits from obtaining a hearing. When the tidings of this strange occurrence reached Clusone, Bernardine instantly discerned in it the deceit of the enemy, and, fearing lest the poor man should be imposed on, he repaired to the house

with a great number of persons, and shutting himself up in it, struck terror into the infernal spirits by prayer and exorcisms in the potent virtue of the most holy Name of Jesus, finally driving them all from the house into their abyss.

After these events the Saint resumed his journey, preaching from place to place according to his wont, and impressing on people's hearts respect and love for the holy Name of Jesus, until he arrived at Como. This is a city of equal antiquity with Bergamo, Brescia, Trent, Verona, Vicenza, and Milan, from which latter place it is twenty-five miles distant. It is said to have been built by Lucius Scipio, restored by Pompey, and afterwards enlarged by Caius Caesar, who called it New Como. In this city civil discord, hatred and dissensions, had raged wildly and cruelly for two hundred years and upwards. Mutual sufferings were of course endured and inflicted; two noble families in particular, those of the Rusconi and Vitani, maintained their feud with such obstinacy that they seemed wholly bent on promoting sedition and ruin in the city. Bernardine laboured to extirpate these divisions, and to unite the factious families in peace. He represented to them the pitiable disasters of past years, and the necessity of forgiving injuries: he exhorted them to bury the names and efface the badges of party, and to unite in a firm and lasting union, but found them so obstinate that all his persuasions failed. He succeeded only in abating somewhat the fury of the factions, in allaying their bitterness for the time, and in converting a noble personage called Vincenzo Rusca, who was afterwards admitted to the Minor Observance by B. Christopher of Monza. It is said that to console his wounded spirit, Bernardine betook him-

self to the convent of Augustinian nuns of S. Andrea di Brunate, which stands on a mountain opposite the city, and in which there then lived a nun of great holiness called Sister Magdalen Albrici, whose sanctity was discovered to the man of God by a heavenly light. With this spouse of Christ he indulged himself in holy discourse, and inflamed still more the fervour of the other nuns in the love of God and religious perfection. Bernardine, after having left the city of Como with, we must suppose, little satisfaction, went about preaching in the adjacent territory, as is proved by the popular tradition, as well as by sundry ancient pictures in churches, in which the saint is represented preaching.

In the month of November he entered the Milanese territory, and the town of Treviglio, where God was preparing to comfort him. This is an extremely ancient town, with a large population, distant one day's journey eastward from Milan, and belonging to that duchy and diocese. Bernardine began to preach here on S. Martin's day, 1419; and as that saint is the titular of the church of Treviglio (which afterwards became a cathedral), the people had assembled in great numbers for the feast. The Saint continued to preach every morning at an early hour for fifteen days, with marvellous profit and comfort to the people of the place, for whom he likewise formed a brotherhood of the Disciplinati, under the title of S. Martin, in which they could exercise themselves in works of piety. The church of this brotherhood was built in the following year, and consecrated on the 3rd of May, 1422. In it is preserved the portable pulpit from which S. Bernardine preached in the open fields lessons of peace to the people of Treviglio and Caravaggio, who had been at

war with each other ; and from his success in reconciling them, the spot where he preached, half-way between the two towns, is called the Field of Peace. From this same pulpit preached, many years after, the sainted Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, Charles Borromeo, from which time it has been held in still greater veneration.

But whilst Bernardine was thus occupied in gathering in a wonderful harvest in Lombardy, Brother Manfred, of whom we spoke in the fourth chapter, more devoted than ever to his false opinion that Antichrist was at hand, set out with a train of the simple common people whom he had beguiled with his preaching, for Florence, where Pope Martin V. was then residing, having travelled thither from Mantua in the preceding February. We must suppose that S. Bernardine, having learnt that Brother Manfred was on the point of starting with his followers, prudently sent word, before taking any measures against him, to the Master-General of the Dominicans, at that time F. Leonard Stazio de' Dati, a Florentine, afterwards Cardinal, who had complained to Bernardine of not having been able to cause Brother Manfred to desist from his singular teaching and conduct. S. Bernardine began then from this time publicly to oppose Brother Manfred, reproving his opinion in different places, and giving his sect the name of Antichristian. He further wrote a small treatise on the subject, and a little pamphlet of twenty-three articles, which he defended against Brother Manfred. This conduct of the Saint was not agreeable to some persons. Brother Manfred, in the first place, and many of his adherents, opposed themselves to S. Bernardine, and began to watch all his actions, and take

down every word he uttered, in order to find some matter for throwing discredit upon him. We shall presently explain how the wild storm of persecution that ensued was raised. Meanwhile, it is enough to mention that the Pope, fearing some scandal from Brother Manfred and his deluded followers, forbade any one to give them alms, intending thus to make them return home; but this did not produce the desired effect. Leaving them, therefore, in Florence, let us return to S. Bernardine, who, with great fruit and stupendous miracles, continued his course of preaching in Lombardy.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SAINT PREACHES THE LENT AT MANTUA AND WORKS MIRACLES THERE; THEN PREACHES IN CREMONA AND PIACENZA.

THE Imperial Vicar of Mantua was John Francis Gonzaga, who was afterwards created first Marquis of the same town by the Emperor Sigismund on his return from his coronation at Rome in 1433. His lady, Paola Malatesta, a person of great piety and devotion, had heard of the sanctity and wonderful actions of S. Bernardine, and eagerly desired that he should preach the Lent at Mantua. Many cities and people coveted the same happiness, but the pious lady at last succeeded in engaging him for the year 1420. He preached in the cathedral during the whole Lenten course with such happy results that it is impossible to relate all the wonderful conversions that he effected. So it pleases God, who gives to His true servants accents of power, to move men's hearts

and work great things for His own greater glory by means of these chosen instruments. Bernardine during this season lodged in the convent of S. Maria delle Grazie, five miles from the city, between Rivalta and Curtalone. This house, which had formerly been a little hermitage and church, was built in the year 1400 in fulfilment of a vow for deliverance from the plague by Francis Gonzaga, the first of that name, Lord and Perpetual Vicar of Mantua for the Roman Empire ; and soon after its erection, (the new church was consecrated August 15th, 1406,) certain poor friars, strict observers of their rule, were placed in the convent by Francis's particular desire.

It chanced one day, probably not long after he had begun his Lenten course, that Bernardine set out with a companion from the convent of S. Maria to preach in Mantua, and having to pass the lake which lies before the city, asked a boatman to have the charity to take them over. The man, who was one of those who care little for the reward they would receive from above, demanded his fare, thinking that Bernardine secretly carried money. The Saint in vain told him that he was penniless, having renounced his possessions for the love of God, and begged him for the same love to transport him to the city in which he was to preach, for the boatman with increasing brutality replied that whether it cost the Saint his sermon or not, no place should he have in his boat until he paid the fare. Bernardine seeing that he could not reach the city by this means, and full of trust in that God Who has special charge of the humble and of those who fear Him, Who commands the winds and waves, and walks upon the sea, turning to his comrade asked him if he truly confided in God, and being assured that he did,

went on to question him whether he would follow in what he should see him do, and having received a plain testimony of the brother's lively faith in reply, stretched his cloak on the waters and stepped upon it, followed by his companion. Those who were in the boat into which the thoughtless ferryman had refused to take Bernardine, and the people on the bank, in amazement at the sight of so marvellous an action, loudly implored the divine mercy. The Saint and his companion meanwhile kneeling with their eyes and hands raised to heaven, continually imploring the divine help without any fear, happily set foot on the other bank before the boat was half-way across, and landed without appearing at all wet, and even the cloak remained dry.

There happened another miracle through his means by virtue of the most holy Name. Whilst he was pursuing his course of preaching with wonderful advantage to its inhabitants, a native of Ostiglia, a town twenty miles distant from Mantua, came to that city in the hope of obtaining from the holy preacher the remedy of a most grievous evil which had befallen him ; for an unclean spirit, without his knowledge, had introduced itself into his house. The man having exposed his great trouble to the holy father, with urgent entreaties begged for his counsel and help to effect his deliverance from the evil, which the Saint without delay communicated, ordering him to make with all his family a diligent confession, and then to sprinkle the house with holy water in the most holy Name of Jesus. This counsel happily produced its effect, God concurring by the merits of His servant both to glorify the Name of His beloved Son, and to make manifest to men the

sanctity of Bernardine. The Saint having occasion to pass by Ostiglia not many days after, learnt from the man that as soon as he had put his advice into execution, his house was freed from the diabolical annoyance.

Bernardine performed some other memorable actions during the time of his preaching at Mantua, amongst which the foundation of the monastery of Corpus Christi and S. Paola, which was made by his advice, will not hold the last place. In Mantua there were two convents of nuns, one called S. Clare of Migliarino, the other S. Lucy ; but as the nuns did not live in the rigour of poverty of the first rule of S. Clare, having embraced the constitutions of Urban IV., whence they were denominated Urbanists, S. Bernardine, by exhortation and counsel, strengthened the desire of Paola to build a new convent for nuns, who should profess the first rule of S. Clare, and live without any possessions in the most severe poverty. In the meantime, however, as Lent was now over, Bernardine, whilst they awaited the Papal permission, and disposed matters for the foundation of this house, passed on to preach in other districts and cities. Amongst others, he visited Cremona, an ancient city, formerly a Roman colony, half-way between Pavia and Mantua, from which place it is distant forty miles. For fifty days Bernardine continually preached in reproof of vice with such fervour of spirit and vehemence, that, as a vast concourse attended his sermons, he wrought immense benefit, bringing back from the path of perdition to that of safety many grievous sinners. Travelling up and down afterwards as usual to this place and that, he arrived at Piacenza, a city of Lombardy, on the Po, only eighteen

miles from Cremona. The holy preacher was welcomed by its citizens, and found them so docile and ready to receive his lessons, and so well affected towards his order, that they spontaneously resolved to erect a house for his followers. The Saint's preaching in Piacenza is attested by the ancient records of that city, and likewise by his pulpit, which is preserved to this day in the church of the Conventual Fathers, having on the front the portrait of the Saint holding in his hand the little tablet with the Name of Jesus, which he used to show to the people at the end of his sermons.

CHAPTER VIII.

ORIGIN OF THE CONVENT OF CORPUS CHRISTI AND
S. PAOLA AT MANTUA, AND OF THAT OF THE
HOLY GHOST IN THE SAME CITY.

THE example and counsel of S. Bernardine had such an effect on the mind of the devout Paola Malatesta, that she meditated the immediate execution of the design which she had conceived of building a new convent of strict observance for women in her city of Mantua. For the preceding eight years there had lived on the Fiera twenty poor women of honourable and holy life, but not subject to any rule, who were held in great esteem by the people of Mantua. The pious lady cast her eyes on these poor people, and, judging that they would be very proper subjects for the execution of her project, by forming the groundwork of her spiritual building, she erected, at her own cost, a new church, under the double title of Corpus Christi

and S. Paola, with an adjacent convent, capable of holding a great number of nuns. Thomas Donesmundi, the Prince's secretary, concurred in this pious work by a free gift of the site and some houses. Such being the plan of foundation, the confirmation of it was obtained from Martin V. on the 27th of December, in the fourth year of his reign. Enclosed in this convent, the twenty women above-mentioned, who were to form the first-fruits of a numerous band of spouses of Christ, hereafter to flourish in religious perfection under the observance of a most rigorous poverty, professed the rule of S. Clare in its primitive rigour, after the instructions and orders left by S. Bernardine. But, as they required a person to guide them through their noviciate in the regular institute, S. Bernardine, in virtue of faculties from the Pope, dated December the 26th of the same year, took from the convent of S. Ursula of Milan Sister Franceschina of Guissano, a nun of singular virtue, and constituted her first abbess of the convent of Corpus Christi and S. Paola, July the 1st, 1421.

The perfection to which the first inmates of this convent attained is beyond description. At various times their house served as an example and model of many others erected or reformed, either by its nuns, or by others in imitation of it, who procured by Papal Briefs a participation in the privileges which had been accorded by Pope Martin. Such was the convent of Corpus Christi at Ferrara, to found which Tadolea, daughter of Gilberto Pio, Lord of Carpi, and widow of the Lord of Imola, was taken from the convent at Mantua, together with her daughter Lucina; and, from the house at Ferrara, S. Catherine Vigri, surnamed of Bologna, and the

Venerable Joanna de' Lambertini passed to found the convent of Corpus Christi at Bologna, that of S. Clare at Verona, of the same Saint at Murano, of S. Bernardine at Padua, of S. Mary of the Angels at Peltre, those of Mercy at Reggio and Modena, and sundry others.

The Lords of Mantua always held the convent in great veneration, and did not hesitate to place in it many noble ladies of their illustrious line, who heartily despised worldly greatness for the sake of becoming princesses in the kingdom of Heaven. Such were Sister Clare Gonzaga, daughter of John Francis Gonzaga and of the pious foundress, his consort; Sister Angelica, daughter of Louis, second Marquis of Mantua; Sister Angela Gabriella, and Sister Angelica, nieces of Francis, the last Marquis; and lastly, Sister Paola, daughter of the same Francis, and sister of Frederic, first Duke of Mantua, who, whilst gifted with angular virtues, excelled her sister religious in humility, voluntary poverty, and exact obedience, leaving behind her the odour of sanctity. But the first place is due to the foundress herself, who, after the death of her husband the Marquis, withdrew into this convent, and piously passed the remainder of her days in the habit of S. Clare; being of all the sisters the most humble, the most ready to serve others, the most constant in prayer, and strict in reducing her body by penance. She desired to be buried without pomp in the habit of S. Clare, before the door of the sacredty, where a statue of her now stands, surrounded by rays, and inscribed with the title of Blessed. She chose this spot for her tomb, that all who passed by might tread upon her remains, and

that priests, in leaving the sacristy to celebrate Mass, might remember to pray for her soul.

The convent of Corpus Christi and S. Paola had obtained from the Pope at the time of its foundation many privileges, particularly one which empowered the nuns to choose for confessor any priest, secular or regular, provided he were of good repute, in default of finding any of the friars minors, to whose care and direction they had been committed. Still, the religious were not entirely satisfied. They required for the divine Sacrifice and for the confessional friars of exemplary and saintly life, who, by their excellent instructions and good example, might serve as their guides in the arduous path of perfection which they had chosen, and ever excite them to fresh fervour in the way of the Lord. The pious foundress provided for this want by arranging, through S. Bernardine, that the fathers of his Observance—who, as we have said above, occupied the convent of S. Maria delle Grazie, five miles from the city—should assume the burden of directing the nuns; and Pope Martin V., in execution of this plan, granted to the said nuns by a Brief, under date of the 4th May, 1421, the right of being supplied by the minister-general of these friars with some of his subjects, of esteemed holiness and professors of the Observance, for confession, the administration of the other sacraments, the divine office, and the celebration of Mass. At the same time the Pope confirmed the privilege, which he had granted a few months previously, allowing them to choose any eligible priest, in case they could not conveniently be served by one of the friars of the Observance.

This arrangement, however, met with some ob-

stacles; for the friars of S. Maria had obtained by Apostolic authority the grant of a little hospital and church adjoining, called the Holy Ghost, from the canons of S. Mark of Mantua, which they occupied whenever they came from S. Maria into the city. The convent of S. Francis at Mantua was then inhabited by the Conventual Fathers, who in 1436 were obliged by the Pope's orders to cede it to the Fathers of the Observance, and to remove elsewhere. The grant of the hospital of the Holy Ghost to the Observantines enabled the devout Paola to secure to the nuns of her convent the continual service of these exemplary friars. She had, in addition to the privileges above mentioned, obtained from Pope Martin, by a Brief of the 26th of December, in the fourth year of his Pontificate, ample permission to found and erect in the cities of Mantua, Milan, Piacenza, and their dioceses, or elsewhere, three convents for nuns of the first rule of S. Clare, and four monasteries for brothers of the Observance, S. Bernardine being appointed her commissary and chief agent. In virtue of these faculties, Paola bought up several houses adjoining the hospital of the Holy Ghost, and presented them to the order of Observantines of S. Maria delle Grazie, that they might build a monastery for a moderate number of friars. This was done soon after, and the good nuns were thus fully provided with holy directors for the spiritual profit and comfort of their souls. As we have now exhibited the effects of the fervent preaching, holy example, and counsel of S. Bernardine in Mantua, we will again the sainted preacher on his way from Lombardy to Tuscany.

CHAPTER IX.

S. BERNARDINE DEPARTS FOR TUSCANY, AND VISITS
THE BODY OF THE B. PETER PETRONJ AT SIENA.

ON HIS RETURN INTO LOMBARDY HE PREACHED
AT BRESCIA. — ACCEPTED THE FOUNDATION OF SEVE-
RAL MONASTERIES.

S. BERNARDINE, after having preached at Piacenza, at the beginning of the Emilian Way, began probably to travel by it towards Tuscany. We may suppose that he was called to that country in order to confer upon the advance which the order of the Observance was making in Lombardy, and to take steps for its still greater progress. Whilst he was at Siena, it happened that in the Carthusian monastery of Maggiano, half a mile from that city, the body of the B. Peter Petronj was discovered, sixty years after his death; that holy man being of the family of the founder of this monastery, Richard Cardinal Petronj, by whom it was built in 1311. This discovery was attended with wonderful circumstances, the fame of which spread through Siena, and the citizens and people of the neighbourhood ran in troops to praise Him Who is wonderful in His Saints. This word of Scripture was justified by the fact that, after the lapse of so many years, during which the holy body had remained buried, it was still incorrupt, with the habit unimjured, and the whole form but slightly altered from its appearance when alive, and further, when some one, in the disinterment, accidentally struck one of the legs with a spade, there issued from

of fresh blood. S. Bernardino had heard much of this servant of God when, whilst a youth, he had inscribed himself in the brotherhood of the Discipline in the hospital of S. Maria della Fede, of which the B. Peter had likewise been a member, and being moved by the report of the singular discovery of his remains, he went to visit the holy body, and could not refrain from impressing pious kisses on its virginal flesh; and then, bathed in sweet tears, he addressed the crowd present in a panegyric of the blessed man, exhorting all to thank God, and to become imitators of his virtues, in whose uncorrupted flesh they beheld the pledge of a glorious resurrection to come. Not content with this, the Saint inwardly resolved to publish where it was yet and now the holy character of the institute to which the B. Peter belonged, and this design he carried out a few years later in Venice.

In the year 1424, brother Angelo de' Salvetti, a man of noble birth, learning, and prudence, who had been master of the Province of Tuscany, being chosen minister general of the Order, appointed S. Bernardino vicar and commissary of the pious houses in the provinces of Umbria and Tuscany, as those were called which, small and few in number, then belonged to the order of the Observance. Invested with this authority, the saint soon after returned to Lombardy, and at the invitation of the citizens of Brescia repaired to their ancient and noble city to preach, taking up his residence in the convent of S. Francis. By his discourses and exhortations he reaped a plentiful harvest, inducing the people to correct many of their vices, and in particular rooting out entirely by the energy of his words the wicked and inveterate

mischiefs of faction, and replacing amongst the Brescians a peace and harmony which had been long banished from their homes. He also closed the hungry mouth of usury, a sin which had been hitherto unblushingly practised by traders in that place.

Bernardine procured the erection of a little convent for the followers of his Observance at a spot beyond the city walls eastward, where stood a church of S. Apollonius, formerly Bishop of Brescia. At the same place, by which the way to S. Floriano now passes, may be seen a spring opposite to a stone raised on the wall in memory of the famous apparition of SS. Faustin and Jovita, at the time of the siege of the city by Nicholas Piccinino in 1419. This convent remained standing until about 1519, when in the course of the wars then raging it was razed to the foundations; but another was built by the piety of the people of Brescia, of capacious dimensions, within the city and near the great square. By the special desire of the good citizens, the large church adjoining this new convent was dedicated to S. Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and into this building the ancient records of the first church of SS. Apollonius and Roch were transported.

From the city of Brescia the Saint travelled to many places in its territory, whose populations had requested his presence, and now listened to him with very great spiritual profit. Whilst passing thus from place to place sowing the word of God, he came to that delightful island which rises from the bosom of the Lago di Garda. There stood on it an old hermitage called after the Blessed Francis of Gargano, which had formerly been occupied by the seraphic S. Francis, as we learn from some letters of S. Bonaventure to the

land which are preserved there. St. Bernardine converted this place into a pious monastery, and entitled it St. Maria di Gesù. In another part of the island a lonely cave is shown, into which St. Bernardine is said to have withdrawn when he came into the neighbourhood, to attend, amidst the numerous and heavy occupations of active life, to the sweet repose of heavenly contemplation.

About this time Philip Mary Visconti, Duke of Milan, considering, as he says in a document dated the 6th of May, 1431, the praiseworthy character and great merits of the venerable and very pious friar, Brother Bernardine of Siena, of the order of Minors, and the advantage which he had conferred by his preaching on the souls of the people living in the parts of Lombardy subject to his Highness, determined to assign a spot near the city of Pavia, as he had done near Milan in the case of the church of St. Mary of the Angels, in which the same Brother Bernardine and the friars of his order, who were followers of his life, observance, and practices, might live in security and peace. He therefore conceded for the use and dwelling place of the friars of this order just named, the church and premises of St. James, beyond, but not far from, the city of Pavia, with all its buildings, possessions, and appurtenances. The letters of this assignment and grant were presented to Peter de' Grossi, Bishop of Pavia, together with those of Martin V., dated at Milan the 15th of October, in the first year of his Pontificate, by which his Holiness had empowered the minister general, vicars and friars of the Observance in the state of Milan to erect and to accept convents, and the same Bishop according to the tenor of these letters conceded to St. Bernardine, and three others his companions, Simon of Milan,

Dominic of Genoa, and Francis of Pavia, the above-named church with its appurtenances, and a farm in which there was a vineyard, a meadow, and a garden ; and the whole was accepted by them in their own name and that of their order. They were inducted into possession of the church and farm on the 14th of August of the same year by Michael de Caninanis, Provost of the principal church of Pavia, who had been appointed the Duke's procurator; the consent of the chapter of Pavia having been previously obtained. Moreover, the erection of a monastery on the same spot was soon effected by the liberal alms of the Duke and the citizens, who were full of love for S. Bernardine and his disciples. This monastery is now in the possession of the fathers of the strict Observance, and the body of the Blessed Bernardine of Feltre is kept there for veneration. He was formerly Provincial vicar of the Observantines of the province of Venice, and a true and faithful imitator, as well in name as in work, of the life, conduct, and zeal of S. Bernardine of Siena.

CHAPTER X.

S. BERNARDINE'S FIRST PREACHING IN VENICE.—HE OBTAINS A HOUSE FOR SOME CARTHUSIAN MONKS.

THE sound of the apostolic voice of S. Bernardine, and the fame of his holy actions, having gone from Lombardy over the whole of Italy, reached Venice, then the chief city, not only of Italy, but of the world.

Many of the good Venetians desired to hear this great man, and to receive light and comfort from his strong and sweet words, to the profit of their souls; and to their great joy, the Saint visited Venice in 1422, and remained there for some months, preaching constantly with great fruit to a countless assembly of people, amongst whom were several noble and distinguished persons. In Venice, and the surrounding cities of the Marca of Treviso, the Saint gained for the most holy Name of Jesus a greater triumph than anywhere else, not only imprinting the devotion to it on the people's hearts, but causing it to be carved or painted on the church-fronts and the doors or walls of private houses, in the form of three capital letters in the Gothic characters of that age, surrounded by rays of gold. In some places records of this practice may still be found.

As the profession of trading was (and still is) in great repute in this celebrated city, which is styled the Queen of the Sea, on account of the great concourse of ships which bear to it goods from every part of the world, Bernardine, after having duly commended this employment, went on to teach what the Christian religion allows in buying, selling, and lending, and pointed out the method of conducting commerce without injury to souls. He further, by his preaching, strengthened in the breasts of the patricians a pious and unchangeable resolve to maintain justice; and, by his holy and gentle manners, attracted their kindness, and formed a friendship with some of the most distinguished men, by whom he was regarded with the deepest veneration.

From this success the Saint took occasion to open a way to the execution of the design, which little more

than a year before he had conceived when visiting the holy body of the B. Carthusian Peter Petronj at Siena, as was related in the last chapter. Bernardine, in private conversations with many citizens of Venice, spoke with high praise of the sanctity and virtues of the B. Peter, and by recounting the miracles which he had personally witnessed on the occasion of the finding of his venerable body, began to dispose their minds kindly towards the order of Carthusians, to which the B. Peter had belonged. He spoke of their institute with high approbation, explaining the singular privileges which were enjoyed by these solitary monks, who, attending day and night to heavenly contemplation in the severe retirement of their cloister, watch continually, like faithful sentinels, over the defence of the city and people, and obtain, by the merit of their prayers, that the onslaught of enemies may be diverted, or that they may be vanquished in the battle ; furthermore, he represented the great aid which they afford to those other religious who issue from their cloisters to combat vice, so that whilst these, like Moses, raise their pure hands to heaven in prayer, the victory which the warriors obtain properly belongs to them. Having thus disposed the minds of many of the patricians to receive into Venice this jewel, which had hitherto been wanting as an ornament and bulwark to a city adorned by so many convents of holy orders, whose prayers and works interceded with God for the protection of the state, the holy preacher, having occasion one day to repair to the audience of his Highness the Doge, whilst discoursing, amongst other things, in favour of the Carthusians, solicited the favour of their introduction into the city. His request was granted, and

the island of S. Andrea al Lido, the largest of the many that surround the city, was assigned to the Carthusians.

It may not be out of place to give here a short account of the foundation of this monastery, in which S. Bernardine had so worthy a share. The isle of S. Andrea al Lido had been conceded by Mark Nicholas, Bishop of Castello, in 1190, to Dominic Franco, a priest of the Church of S. Andrea di Mani, who built upon it a church and convent, which was filled by Augustinian hermits. After the cession of this island, at Bernardine's request, to the Carthusians, it was necessary to obtain from the reigning Pope, Martin V., bulls of translation, in order that the few hermits living on the island might be removed to some other place. Having procured the bulls, the Senate, under this Papal concession, conceded the said island of S. Andrea to the aforesaid Carthusian monks for their dwelling-place, and gave them permission to enter the State of Venice by a public decree of the 2nd of December, 1422, Tommaso Mocenigo being then Doge of Venice. But possession of the island was not given to the Carthusians until 1423, when Francis Foscari had succeeded to the office of Doge on the death of Mocenigo; and only in 1425, after the monastery had been arranged in conformity with the laws of the Carthusian institute, was it united and incorporated with the order in a general chapter celebrated that year.

Another great benefit, according to tradition, was conferred by Bernardine at this time on Venice. As he was always charitable towards the sick, and industrious in the care of the victims of the plague, whom he had served whilst he was yet a young man in the world,

he obtained from the state, by his humble and devout entreaties, that an island, called S. Mary of Nazareth, should be devoted to the use of these unfortunate people, and to the safety of Venice, in time of any contagious disorder. Brother Gabriel, a hermit who lived on this island, was removed to another, and the place began to be called the hospital of Nazareth (Nazaretto), which was vulgarly corrupted into *Lazaretto*, and, to distinguish it from another erected in 1468, it is still called the old Lazaretto. The tradition which we have recorded is supported by the date of the building of this hospital, which, according to Sansovino, in the fifth book of his "Venice," was 1423, and also by the Name of Jesus, encircled with rays, and formed in Gothic characters according to S. Bernardine's model, which exists on the chief places of the island, particularly on the façade of the church over the door.

At this time the order of Minors had three convents in Venice, the great house of S. Maria de' Frari, as the house of the Conventual Fathers is commonly called; S. Francesco in the island of the desert near Burano, and S. Francesco della Vigna. Although history does not record which of these houses served as the abode of Bernardine, and he may have lived at different times in all three, as the order was not then divided, still it is probable that he sojourned for the most part at S. Francesco della Vigna, a small convent, and one adapted to the laws of poverty. Here, as well as in the convent de' Frari, he won over the brethren by his holy exhortations and example, and finding them well disposed by their refusal of privileges to live according to the purity of his rule, they became the first minors of the Observance in

Venice. It is at least certain that they were living at Venice in 1427, and in the above-named convent della Vigna in 1437, as appears from the briefs of Martin V. in the tenth year of his Pontificate, and of Eugenius IV., in the seventh of his reign.

CHAPTER XI.

S. BERNARDINE RETURNS TO BERGAMO TO RECEIVE THE FOUNDATION OF A CONVENT WHICH IS MUCH FAVOURED BY THE BLESSED VIRGIN.—HE THEN PREACHES THE ADVENT IN VERONA.

PETER of Alsano, a noble citizen of Bergamo, remembering the great harvest that S. Bernardine had gathered by his preaching in that city, and desiring to see friars of the Observance established there, completed in the year 1422, on the 27th of June, by a public instrument still preserved amongst his descendants, the gift of a foundation for the erection of a convent. The Saint being informed of this act, thought fit to return to Bergamo, and assist at this foundation, which he accepted by virtue of the authority imparted to him by the Pope; and the affair acquired great solemnity from a miracle by which it was accompanied. S. Bernardine and the Bishop, Brother Francis degli Agregazzi, a minor of Cremona, were walking in procession with the clergy and people to lay the first stone of the new church, when suddenly there appeared in the air a great brightness, and in the midst the most glorious Virgin Mary with her Divine Son in her arms. This appearance lasted for the space of two *Misereres*, so that

the Saint had time to kneel down, with a great number of the people to whom this vision was vouchsafed. It was a proof of the goodwill with which our Blessed Lady regarded the works and piety of her devoted servant, and of her good pleasure to be served and honoured in this spot, which the Saint accordingly asked the Bishop to designate by the title of *S. Maria delle Grazie*.

The memory of this event is represented and may be seen at this day in an old picture on the façade of the church, outside the door on the right hand, with the following inscription beneath it : “ Here S. Bernardine, having received a revelation from the Virgin Mary to choose this spot, came with the clergy and people and with the Bishop, in procession, with great solemnity and joy, to take possession of it, and to lay the first stone of the church. During the procession a great and marvellous brightness was seen in the air, so that people said they saw the heavens opened. This brightness shows that God had shed by His servant Bernardine the light of faith and the knowledge of the way of the salvation of souls. Thus the saying of Isaias was verified, saying, ‘ The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light : to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen.’ * For at this time men were so blinded by the devil, that few approached confession, and hardly any communion ; there was no observance, few kept the commandments, and the spirit of party prevailed, with great sins.”

The erection of the convent was also begun, although only completed later, and the Saint set the friars of his Observance to dwell in it. In front of the church

* Chap. ix. 2.

might once have been seen an oak planted by the Saint's own hand, which grew to such a size and height as to exceed all other trees of the kind. It was afterwards torn up from the roots by the wind, and the material made use of for the convent. There is also current an ancient tradition that God at the prayer of S. Bernardine caused a spring with five jets to rise miraculously near the house, in order to appease the thirst of a great multitude of people who had followed him to hear the word of God, which he preached along the streets and roads. Others declare that this happened on occasion of the Saint's stretching out his hand to the ground to support himself whilst slipping down, and that five springs of pure water gushed forth from beneath his fingers. Be this as it may, it is certain that those who suffer from fever experience wonderful effects from drinking this water with lively faith and devotion. S. Bernardine about this time performed another memorable act in Bergamo, by investing the nuns of the convent of S. Maria delle Rose with the habit of the poor nuns of S. Clare, and teaching them to live after the strict rule of that Saint, to the great comfort and advantage of their souls.

Everything being in good order for the greater advancement of his new foundation, Bernardine set himself afoot to prosecute his preaching in other places, for Advent was now approaching. In travelling between Bergamo and Verona, which city he reached in October, he found under an oak the dead body of a poor man who had been murdered there a little before the Saint came to the spot, and being moved to pity at the fatal deed, he knelt down in prayer and recalled the man to life. On the

1st of November, the Saint began to preach in the cathedral of this great and most noble city, which lies in the Venetian States and Marca of Treviso, at the foot of the Alps, almost intersected by the river Adige. The concourse of people was so vast that the church, although very spacious, was hardly able to contain them, and there the Saint continued his Apostolic ministry with great profit to their souls till the 17th of January of the following year.

Amongst the many holy fruits of S. Bernardine's preaching in Verona, he introduced, in the first place, the practice of frequently approaching the sacraments, correcting a custom which had obtained with many persons of receiving them only once in the year. In the second place he procured (either at this time or some years later) that certain races introduced by an ancient law in memory of a victory gained in the year 1207, which used to take place on the first Sunday of Lent, should be transferred to the Thursday or Sunday next preceding Lent, as it rightly appeared to him a very improper and scandalous thing that at the time devoted with particular solemnity to the divine service and to works of penance, people should be attending feasts, games, and such profane things, which are commonly the cause of innumerable abuses.

Bernardine at the same time won the affection of the Veronese for the rule of Observance which he professed, and did not fail by dint of exhortation and example to procure the erection of a convent or monastery of it in the city. Two years later, in 1424, Victor Bragadino being magistrate of Verona for the Republic of Venice, Cortesia, son of Cortesia Serego, with some other gentlemen, amongst

whom were Galeotto and Giordano de' Radici, having purchased a house with some ground in the street called S. Giovanni in Valle, built a commodious convent and church for nuns of the first rule of S. Clare; and on the 7th of June in the following year, with the consent of Brother Antony of Massa, minister-general of the order, two nuns were taken from the convent of Corpus Christi and S. Paola at Mantua, and transferred as founders to this new house at Verona, namely, Sister Magdalen, and Sister Paola of the noble family of the Aliprandi of Milan, who was appointed perpetual Abbess. The pious Paola Malatesta also concurred in promoting this holy work by obtaining from Pope Martin V. a brief, in which his Holiness extended to the nuns of S. Clare at Verona the privileges which he had conceded to the convent at Mantua.

CHAPTER XII.

S. BERNARDINE PREACHES AT VICENZA, AND THEN TRAVELLING THROUGH THE MARCA OF TREVISO, VISITS TREVISO, BELLUNO, AND FELTRE.

As soon as Bernardine had delivered his last sermon in Venice on the 17th of January, he went about from point to point of the Venetian territory, everywhere sowing the divine word after his wont, and finally left the State for Lent, which began in that year on the 17th of February. It is probable that the city of Padua had the good fortune to hear the Saint at this period. Indeed the foundation of the brother

hood of the Battuti, called *del buon Gesù*, is ascribed to the agency of Bernardine at this time. The house of these brothers was at first situated where stands at present the famous church of S. Justina, but when this was enlarged, the brotherhood removed to a little distance, near SS. Leo and Michael in Prato.

On the 16th of April of this year 1423, Bernardine was in Vicenza, where he remained till the end of June. This is a noble and very ancient city, being accounted one of the twelve which the Tuscans built on this side of the Apennines. It is divided by two navigable rivers of limpid water, the Bacchiglione and Renone, which issue from the neighbouring hills, and, uniting their waters within the city, fall into the Brenta. The Saint began to preach at once, usually in the church of S. Laurence, as it belonged to his order, and was very capacious. As he continued to preach daily, the concourse of people went on increasing, and on holidays became so great as to induce Bernardine to preach in the great square. Three days were remarkable for the audience which the Saint's sermons attracted; one was Sunday, the 9th of May, when more than twenty-five thousand people of both sexes attended, of whom many came early in the morning, and many from a great distance. On that day the Saint produced wonderful fruit by his discourse, in which he insinuated a detestation of vanity into the hearts of his female hearers, and induced them to relinquish its follies; and moreover, united in firm and Christian harmony many citizens whose jealousies and enmity had hitherto defied alike the authority of the state, the apprehension of death, and the arguments of mutual friends. Another of these happy days was the Feast of

Corpus Christi, June the 3rd, when the Saint preached on the wonders wrought by Christ in the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and the dispositions required for its worthy reception. Afterwards, according to the custom on that Feast, a procession was formed, and attended by more than thirty thousand persons. Lastly, on Sunday the 20th of June, he preached to more than twenty thousand people on the glories of the most holy Name of Jesus, explaining with great learning and devotion the meaning of each letter of which that most august Name is composed, finally ordering a solemn procession to be formed in its honour.

About this time, in virtue of his appointment as Commissary, which he had received the year before through Paola Malatesta, S. Bernardine introduced his brethren of the Observance into S. Biagio Vecchio, a convent which was abandoned about the year 1400 by its nuns, who left it to live in that of S. Catherine of Berga. It was a quarter of a mile distant from the city, in the suburb of Santa Croce, between the road to Thiene or Schio, and the river Bacchiglione. A small chapel is the sole surviving vestige of this convent, which was razed to its foundations during some war. The brethren were received within the city about the year 1530, under the Dogeship of Andrea Gritti; and, by the alms of the people of Vicenza, a new monastery was raised for them, with a church, on the spot called the Prato dell' Asinella in Pusterla, and this building obtained the name of S. Biagio Nuovo.

Such were the works of S. Bernardine in the two months and a half that he remained in Vicenza, at the end of which time, after having given his last

sermon on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and strengthened the resolution of the people to persevere in a good life, he departed after Mass on the following day, and arriving at Sandrigo, a village eight miles off, preached there for a few days. He then passed on to Bassano, a considerable place of the Marca of Treviso, through which flows the river Brenta in its rapid descent from the Trentine Alps. About the middle of July the Saint reached Treviso, a small but strong and well fortified city, washed by the river Sile, and the capital of the district to which it gives its name. The Saint took with him on his journey Brother John Becino, a Venetian, one of those conventual friars whom he had won over to the Observance whilst at Venice, and an intimate friend of the magistrate then residing in Treviso for the Republic. This officer, by name Francis Barbaro, was a knight of merit, devoted to letters, and a friend to virtuous and learned men, who afterwards attained to great honours in his native country. He received the holy preacher with special marks of pleasure and esteem, and heard him preach with great satisfaction and profit. Whilst Bernardine was attracting the citizens to virtue by gentle ways, reproving every sort of vice with ardent invectives, and gathering a wonderful harvest by these means, Brother Albert of Sarziano, whom he had left on the 26th of July, arrived from Verona, wishing to visit the illustrious Barbaro and the good preacher of Christ, Brother Bernardine, and to enjoy their holy conversation. He was kindly and affectionately received by both, and becoming every day more impressed with the power which Bernardine had over the minds of his hearers, and with his

style of speaking, which was no less gentle and agreeable than strong, learned, and searching, Brother Albert, after consulting the Saint, and being encouraged by Barbaro, resolved to leave the school of Guarino, a famous master of that day in Verona, which he had attended for some months in order to learn Greek, and to follow S. Bernardine, whom he determined to accompany for some time, in order to learn Christian eloquence from him, whithersoever Christ his guide should lead him.

S. Bernardine remained at Treviso during the month of August, living chiefly in the convent of S. Francis, not without the hope of obtaining some house for the friars of his Observance, but this he had no opportunity of effecting at that time. Twelve years later the magistrates and citizens of Treviso, remembering the great benefits which he had rendered them, and moved by their devotion to his person, built for the Saint and his followers a small convent and church, to which, by his desire, they gave the name of S. Maria di Gesù. It stood a mile without the city, on the road to Venice, at a spot called the Ferraglio, where the church of S. Lazarus is at present. Bernardine's house was destroyed during the wars of 1512, and the year following the people of Treviso began the building of a new convent within the city, to which they transferred the former title of S. Maria di Gesù, and which is at present inhabited by the friars of the strict Observance.

As the fame of the wonderful effects of our Saint's preaching diffused itself throughout the land, Cividale di Belluno and the city of Feltre despatched messengers to invite Bernardine to come and preach to them likewise. Andrew Perseghino and Antony de'

Bizerj were the envoys from Belluno, and they laid before the Saint the necessity of his presence in their city, which suffered from odious enmities on account of the hateful factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, their common hope being that the Saint's coming would bring back the people to a quiet and peaceable state. The deputies from Feltre spoke to the same effect, and both parties received from the Saint a kind promise to visit the two cities soon, for which purpose, leaving Treviso on the 3rd of September with his disciple Brother Albert, Bernardine commenced his journey. Passing Conegliano, he arrived at Ceneda, a town on the side of the hills halfway between Treviso and Belluno, where Antony Corraro, a Dominican, and grand-nephew of Gregory XII., was Bishop and Count; and at this place the Saint preached for some days. .

At last, by steep, rocky, and very difficult paths he arrived at Belluno. This city stands near the Noric mountains, on a lofty plain near the river Piave, in a district inhabited by people of excellent conduct and manners. The general joy at the saintly preacher's arrival was testified by the magistrate for the Republic of Venice, Dolfino Veniero; his Vicar, Louis de' Calvi, a doctor of Bologna; Peter dal Bruno of Cremona, Chancellor; and by the Bishop's Vicar-General, William of Collalto. The Bishop himself, Henry Scarampo of Asti, was then about the person of Pope Martin V., who had made him his treasurer, and administrator of the Patrimony of St. Peter. The pulpit was placed for S. Bernardine in the great square, with an altar, at which the Saint, according to his wont, might celebrate before preaching. There were even proces-

sions to pray of God to give such power to the words of His servant, that they might enter into the hearts of the divided and factious citizens, and bring them to a speedy and perfect peace; for Belluno suffered extremely from the domination at different times of one or the other of these factions, and the oppression of its rival.

The Saint, as soon as he had learnt the state of affairs, mounted the pulpit on the 25th of September, and preached with much energy, setting before the eyes of the factious inhabitants with such clearness the profound evils that resulted from their feuds, that all remained deeply moved; then, referring to the form of government which had hitherto prevailed, and by which at one time the Ghibelline, and at another the Guelph faction ruled, according to the success of their intrigues, so that the unhappy city was involved in numberless disorders, and exposed to the misfortunes which it had experienced in past times, the Saint opened the eyes of the citizens to the undeniable and as it were palpable abuse of their system, and to the necessity of a reform. At the end of his sermon the preacher displayed the most holy Name of Jesus painted on a tablet, which he carried with him, before the people for their veneration; and, as he had exhorted them in his discourse to erase from their doors and walls the fatal emblems of the two factions, he now took occasion to persuade them to depict in their stead that most holy Name, and concluded by offering up on his knees a fervent prayer to God to bless his good intention to the public and private advantage of the people of Belluno.

The persuasions and entreaties of the holy preacher were at once responded to. The people were seen

after the sermon, running through the city almost furiously, and everywhere erasing from the walls and other places the badges of party, to replace them by the symbol of the Adorable Name. This emblem may still be seen, carved after the pattern on S. Bernardine's little tablet, on the Town-hall, on the walls of S. Peter's Church, and over the doors of many houses. The minds of the citizens, heretofore so disunited and so devoted to party, appeared so far softened that a few days beheld the former savage and jealous spirit extinct, and the city reduced to a state of tranquillity and marvellous harmony.

To ensure, however, a continuance of this blessed change, the exhortations of Bernardine seconded the authority of the chief magistrate Veniero, and a general assembly was convoked for the 27th of the month. The proposed change of constitution elicited many long discourses and various opinions; but at last, after a speech of great power from Aldobrandino Dojoni, a distinguished graduate, and a personage of great reputation, the people, remembering the fervent arguments of Bernardine, ran with one accord to the registers of the magistracy, and taking them from the public records, tore them in pieces, knowing that in them lay the source and beginning of all those Guelph and Ghibelline dissensions which tended to the public ruin, since they contained the hateful distinctions of parties. The people further notified by a public edict that every one should produce all books which contained similar registers, in order to extirpate entirely the memory of this baneful practice. Such were the happy effects of the Saint's powerful preaching in Belluno, so that, while the greatness of the benefit conferred obliged the inhabitants to render

due thanks to God, they felt also bound at the same time to preserve for ever the memory of Bernardine, who had procured for them this happiness.

The Saint went in October from Belluno to Feltre, an ancient city only fifteen miles distant, amidst the Alps of Trent, and belonging to the Marca of Treviso. There Bernardine preached for some days with his usual fervour and success. His sermons were always attended by Brother Albert, who had already made great advances towards learning his master's gentle and powerful method of preaching. From Feltre Bernardine, after satisfying the desires of the inhabitants, began his journey to Florence with his disciple, being either recalled by the affairs of his order, or by some such motive.

CHAPTER XIII.

S. BERNARDINE SENDS BROTHER ALBERT TO MODENA,
AND STAYS HIMSELF TO PREACH AT FERRARA ;
HE THENCE GOES TO BOLOGNA, WHERE HE HAS
WONDERFUL SUCCESS.

THE humble Bernardine could no longer suffer that Brother Albert, a person of singular talent, and well versed in secular learning, should employ his time in listening to another's preaching, when he was himself most capable of speaking with credit and advantage to the people. Accordingly, when the two travellers arrived at Ferrara, a city lying in the Emilian district or Romagna, beyond the Po, where Nicholas the

Third of the house of d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara and Lord of Modena, received them with great favour and consideration, as was his laudable practice with men of worth and learning, Bernardine, by his authority as superior, obliged Brother Albert to put himself forward in public, and, staying himself at Ferrara for the approaching Advent, despatched his disciple to Modena, there to commence the ministry for which the Saint had destined him. The success which attended Brother Albert's first sermon redounded to the glory of Bernardine: the good friar, on the 12th of November, ascended the pulpit, and treading faithfully in his master's footsteps, uprooted the dissensions caused by the two factions in Modena, and united in peace the divided minds of its inhabitants. Brother Albert likewise repressed certain disorders which had sprung up from a spirit of gambling in that city.

Meanwhile S. Bernardine, at Ferrara, was proceeding happily with a still firmer step, to eradicate abuses. One of these, which prevailed at that time in several Italian towns, was directly opposite to that which obtains, with so much scandal, in our own days, for ladies exhibited such great pomp and vanity in dress, as to wear long trains, and seemed to correspond with this excess by great immodesty in their whole bearing. The Saint directed his efforts against this scandalous practice, and by exposing the many sins to which it gave birth, succeeded in adding to the many good works which he effected by his preaching at that time the no small achievement of having checked this license of dress, by having brought back the women of Ferrara to the laws of moderation and Christian modesty. After terminating his Advent course of sermons, the holy preacher resolved to

prosecute his journey, and arrived at Bologna early in the month of January 1424, where his faithful disciple Albert met him; for, although he had begun with such applause the ministry of preaching, he was reluctant to leave S. Bernardine, and reputed himself very unfit for the task in which he had lately been engaged.

Bologna is thought to be the most ancient city which the Tuscans had in the vicinity of the Apennines; and at the present day it far exceeds in size, and surpasses in the beauty, strength, and symmetry of its buildings, all the other cities of the Romagna. At the date of our Saint's arrival, Gabriel Condulmero, a Venetian, of the congregation of S. George in Aliga, Bishop of Siena and Cardinal, held for the second time the function of legate for Pope Martin V.; and Nicholas degli Albergati, a Carthusian, who was afterwards Cardinal of the title of Santa Croce, and is numbered amongst the Blessed, was Bishop of the city. Both these dignitaries received Bernardine with kindness, and the Bishop in particular rejoiced that he had come at that time to assist him in extirpating abuses and destroying vice; and he assigned to him with this view, the task of preaching in S. Petronius' church during the coming Lent. Bernardine, being anxious to reach Florence, left Bologna with the design of returning for the appointed time.

The good Bishop Nicholas had laboured, in the discharge of his pastoral office, to reform the depraved habits of his flock, and had found, amongst other grave disorders, with extreme sorrow of heart, a great number of gambling-houses, which the Bolognese, with great scandal and injury to God, freely

frequented, insomuch that they became the object of a public tax. The good Bishop, in condemnation of these houses, had published severe edicts against those who kept them, and had further ordered that the proceeds of the tax laid upon them should be applied either to the relief of the poor, or the building of the church of S. Petronius. But having made little progress by these measures, he reminded the holy preacher, on his return from Florence, that, whilst reproving other vices, he should have a special regard for that of gambling, to which the citizens and people of Bologna were addicted. Bernardine faithfully executed his instructions, and employing great care and prudence, like a skilful physician, in the cure of the Bolognese, he gained an abundant harvest of wonderful conversions.

But when he came to denounce the evil practice of gambling, which had prevailed in the city for many years, he no longer remained within the church of S. Petronius, although it is a very large building, but standing without on its steps, he preached to an innumerable multitude which had gathered in the square to hear him. Amongst other things, he said that a vicious gamester deceives himself in thinking that he is only guilty of one sin, because indeed he commits many of various kinds. Besides the injurious and irreparable loss of time, of which he will be called to give a rigorous account by God at the end of his life, he likewise dissipates his property, which it was his duty to preserve for himself and for Christ's poor, for the maintenance of life and the relief of his old age; he further lays hands on another's substance, taking from his fellow-citizen, and very frequently from his friend, that which it

became him, as a Christian and a friend, to let them retain against the day of want. If the gambler wins, he becomes dissolute and insolent ; if he loses, such is his disposition and madness that he pours out upon his innocent wife, and against God Himself, the fury of that indignation which he ought to feel towards himself alone ; and sometimes blasphemes the God of Majesty, Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints ; nay, he has even been so far blinded as to rush, sword in hand, to strike their venerable images. Then this outrageous sacrilege has either been avenged by the unseen hand of God, or He has left it to human justice to punish the wretch with death for his crime.

The Saint supported all his arguments by examples and texts of Scripture admirably adapted to his subject, and amplifying them with great fervour of spirit, and with that eloquence which was suited to the gravity of his matter, he gained such success that many persons, moved to a just hatred against play, as the cause of such evils, brought him, in proof of their sincere amendment, boards, cards, dice, tables, and other instruments of the condemned gaming houses ; and this act met with great reward, as the Saint promised to make them all participate in all his Masses of the year. After the octave of Easter, which fell in that year on the 23rd of April, the holy preacher ordered that all these instruments of vice, now become glorious trophies of the victory gained over it, should be piled up in the centre of the square, where they were burnt to the joy of the bystanders.

One man, however, was not so well pleased, a poor artizan called Valerio, who supported himself and his

family by painting cards for play. This man, seeing himself deprived of this gain, went to the holy preacher, complaining that by the loss of this resource for maintaining himself, he had been reduced to extreme misery, since he had not learnt any other kind of painting. S. Bernardine told him to paint, after a model which he himself drew for him, the Name of Jesus, placed in a circle like the sun; and further assured him that he would not regret the change in his art. In fact, when Valerio had produced these little pictures, the people flocked to buy them in such numbers, both on account of the Saint's directions to that purpose, and the devotion which they bore him, that the poor man realized a large profit, and more than recovered his losses.

S. Bernardine left other records of his holy actions in Bologna at this time. He caused an ancient brotherhood in the street of S. Mamolo, which is at present *del buon Gesù*, to bear the title and badges of that sacred Name; and the members of this guild, who wear a white dress, carry this Name on the front of it above a cross of blue, with a white outline, just as they received it from the holy father. Besides this, there is a chapel in the great basilica of S. Petronius, with an altar dedicated to S. Bernardine, which was the Saint's room during the Lent that he spent at Bologna, having been taken into the church when the building was enlarged. In this chapel there is also a pulpit, which was sanctified by the presence and labours of the Saint in his ministry. A little tablet, too, with the Name of Jesus, which the Saint kept hanging at the head of his poor bed, is now in the rooms built for the use of preachers. And in a church beyond the gate of S.

Mamolo, is a stone pulpit from which the Saint sometimes preached.

CHAPTER XIV.

BERNARDINE PREACHES IN FLORENCE AND OTHER PLACES, PARTICULARLY IN VOLTERRA, AND FOR A WHOLE LENT IN PRATO, WHERE HE RESTORES TO HEALTH A YOUTH WHO HAD BEEN INJURED BY A BULL.

THE name of Bernardine had acquired a great celebrity at that time throughout Italy. Letters carried from one place to another the account of the wonderful conversions that followed his preaching, and the austere tenor of his life, which might be known from his countenance, emaciated as it was by many fasts and by the constant labours which occupied his unwearied diligence. The fame of his other wonders was equally spread—his entire disinterestedness, and the general veneration which he excited, men regarding him as the living image of his seraphic father S. Francis. Princes and people rivalled one another in their efforts to secure his presence in their countries, villages, and cities. At the time of our history, the Florentines, having been informed by letter of the Saint's actions in Bologna, sent envoys to invite and beg of him to condescend to the general and eager desire of the citizens of Florence to see him, and hear the Divine Word from his lips in that city. The Saint willingly accorded their request, and, on his arrival at Florence, began to preach to a numerous audience in the church of his

order called Santa Croce, to this day in the occupation of the Conventual friars.

Florence is one of the chief cities of Italy, beautiful both for its situation and buildings, as it lies on the river Arno, by which it is intersected, and is girt on the east and north sides by an amphitheatre of smiling and fertile hills. But it was at that time the receptacle of every kind of vice, which the citizens and people committed, not with remorse, but pride. The Saint, by his fervent sermons, raised the dense veil which had prevented them from seeing so many evils, and having thus enlightened them, found them so docile that he led them to the exemplary practice of a Christian life. He afterwards preached in this city during several Lents, generally in the church of Santa Croce, but once in the cathedral, and on all occasions to such a numerous concourse, and with such satisfaction, that he gathered an abundant harvest from his labours. Here, as elsewhere, he gathered into heaps the toys which people spontaneously offered him, the vanities of an effeminate world, and the instruments of gambling, and burnt them all in the square of Santa Croce. How grateful the Saint's labours were to the people of Florence was shown by their leaving to posterity, as a record of perpetual gratitude, an order embodied in their statutes, that during all future Lents, members of Bernardine's order should preach in the cathedral of the city.

About the time of Bernardine's first course of sermons at Florence, a citizen called Charles de' Ricasoli, having converted a country-house which he possessed on the hill of Morticolo, to which he gave the name of Monte Carlo, near the town of S. Giovanni in Valdarno, into a small, but neat monastery, gave it to

the Saint as a dwelling-place for himself and his pious brethren, who thereby drew on themselves much abuse from one Poggio Brandolino, who saw himself disappointed of his hopes of inheriting it.

Bernardine, after going about from Florence to the surrounding towns and villages, in which he was much sought after by the people, and heard with great devotion and profit to their souls, arrived for the Advent of 1424 at Volterra, a very ancient town of Tuscany, the walls of which are planned like a man's hand, the summit of the hill on which the town stands being composed of five peaks, which enclose five little valleys. In the sermons which he preached in the squares and in the meadow before the church of S. Francis in this city, Bernardine produced his usual wonderful conversions, showing the people, at the conclusion of each, his tablet with the Name of Jesus; and by this means excited them to devotion towards that holy Name, exhorting them to beg for mercy from our Saviour on their knees, and to propose to live firmly in peace with God and men, and likewise to pray the Eternal Father to grant them eternal salvation in virtue of this Name, which was given by Him to His only-begotten Son. Finally, the Saint, blessing them in the same most holy Name, sent them home with sentiments of compunction and comfort.

Bernardine having terminated his preaching in this town, before his departure left to the Republic of Volterra as a present, the tablet on which he had written this holy Name. And, as the acquisition of so precious a treasure was a singular happiness for the city, it was always preserved with the highest veneration. And indeed, whenever the people of Volterra had recourse to this august Name, to implore

either rain in a season of dearth, or fair weather at a time of excessive rain, or again to be preserved from the three scourges of plague, famine, or war, they ever obtained from God the graces for which they prayed, either on exposing the sacred tablet to public veneration in the churches, or on carrying it in procession in solemn pomp through the public streets. The senate of Volterra, moved by this circumstance, raised a church in the year 1443, before the Saint's death, in honour of this most august Name, and instituted a brotherhood to honour and maintain it by exercises of devotion. This tablet of the most holy Name is of wood, about a cubit long, and half a cubit wide. It is preserved in a tabernacle which is lined with two silk veils, and covered outside with bars of gilt wood; the door is secured by two keys, one of which is kept by the guardian of the convent of St. Francis, and the other by the prior of the brotherhood. Such is the veneration exhibited towards this relic, which is an eternal memorial of the zeal, love, and devotion of S. Bernardine towards the most holy Name of Jesus.

From Volterra Bernardine went to Prato, to preach the following Lent in that town, which is a considerable one, between Florence and Pistoja. We may measure the greatness of the veneration and esteem which the people of Prato conceived for him by the great fruits of his preaching there. For, as he was leaving after Easter to preach the gospel in other parts, the people began to follow him in such crowds in order to receive his blessing, that when he reached the gate, the multitude there assembled impeded his passage. Whilst he remained thus surrounded by all the people, between the first and

second gate, called della Trinità, it chanced that a bull, breaking out of a stall near the spot, and frightened at the sight of the crowd, began to run furiously towards the gate, and butting at some with his head, and tossing or trampling upon others, injured a great number of persons. Amongst the rest, a youth named Cosimo, the son of Nicholas Lorenzi, sustained the greatest hurt, having been struck and trampled on by the beast, so that, when raised from the ground, he seemed dead, and the report that he was killed spread quickly through the crowd. Bernardine, on hearing it, felt great sorrow, because he saw that the enemy, in that hour, was endeavouring to destroy all the good which God had wrought in the town through him ; and being moved to compassion, he proceeded to the place where the poor young man was lying insensible, and to all appearance dead. As soon as he saw him, Bernardine raised his eyes to heaven, praying to God for him ; then blessing him with the sign of the cross, he told the bystanders that by God's mercy the youth would recover, and bid them take him from thence. Bernardine then resumed his journey, and the youth was restored to his parents alive and well.

CHAPTER XV.

BERNARDINE GOES TO PREACH IN SIENA AND ITS TERRITORY. — AT AREZZO HE DESTROYS A SUPERSTITIOUS FOUNTAIN, AND BUILDS A CHURCH ON THE SPOT IN HONOUR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN. — S. JOHN OF CAPISTRAN PUTS HIMSELF UNDER BERNARDINE'S TEACHING.

God, who had filled Bernardine with the unction of His Spirit for the salvation of the people of Italy, and to that end had exalted his name in the country of Lombardy, now that he had entered Tuscany, continued to render it still more glorious by the communication of His gifts. Thus the people of Florence, not satisfied with having heard the Saint preach in their city for some days in the preceding year, desired to obtain his services as preacher for the whole course of Lent; that, as that season is the most sacred period of the year, when the faithful should apply themselves with greater earnestness to the care of their souls, they might, with better dispositions and greater leisure, derive profit from his holy lessons. But the people of Siena, hearing of the wonders which the Saint, their fellow-citizen, had wrought in the city of Florence and the surrounding towns for the good of souls, despatched envoys to invite him in the name of the magistrates, as soon as he had concluded his preaching in those parts, to refresh his native country likewise with the spiritual food of the Divine Word.

Bernardine repaired to Siena with great diligence, and was received by the corporation and people with many signs of goodwill and joy. He found the

pulpit prepared in the great square, before the door of the public palace, and mounted it on the 25th of April to begin his preaching, which he continued through that and the following month, in presence of the population, not only of Siena, but also of the surrounding country, so that it was believed that the number of his hearers sometimes amounted to thirty thousand. Whatever Bernardine thought of asking of his fellow-citizens for their good, he succeeded in obtaining, having by his authority and powerful words, no less than by his gentle manners, so won the hearts and affections of the people of Siena, that he easily brought them to do exactly as he desired. Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, a native of Siena, afterwards Bishop of that city, then Cardinal, and finally Pope by the title of Pius II., relates that when, in his youth, he listened to the preaching of Bernardine, he was so strongly moved thereat, that he was well-nigh entering his order. The Saint reformed all depraved habits, and revived in Siena the former laudable manner of life. He pacified many families who, for a long course of years, had cherished deadly hatred, and by the energy of his words, also brought the people to live in a quiet and peaceful state. The heads of the government even framed several laws by his advice for the regulation of their subjects, and mitigated at his suggestion a statute which imposed a large pecuniary fine on any of the twelve magistrates of the Republic who was found out of his house at night. At his proposal also, they completed the building of the principal church of the city, which had been long since begun, and was now brought to a splendid termination at the public expense.

In the meanwhile, Whitsuntide arrived, and on Whit-Monday the sainted preacher, having exhibited the Name of Jesus, painted by himself on a tablet, and moved the people to its veneration, and to sorrow for their sins, ordered a solemn procession for the next day, when he bore this tablet amidst universal devotion and joy, which broke forth in songs and hymns of praise through the city. It is related that the government and magistrates assisted at the Mass which the Saint celebrated as usual, on a portable altar in the square, before the procession took place; and that, to render the procession more attractive, S. Bernardine caused to be carried in it one of the nails with which our Saviour was crucified, and which was preserved in the hospital of the Scala; the right arm of S. Ansano, with which he baptized the citizens of Siena, after having converted them to the faith of Christ; and the head of S. Galgano; and that, finally, he left the tablet of the Holy Name to the fathers of his Order. Such was the feeling he had roused in the people against the vices of gambling and immoderate female vanity, that before his departure he burnt in the public square, before the governor of the town, draughts and chessmen, boards, cards, and dice, ointments, ribbons, false hair, and all other instruments of vanity; and one writer attests that there were forty packets of these things.

Some time after, in order to preserve for ever the memory of Bernardine, and of the great good which he had wrought in his native place, the government of Siena removed the arms of John Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, which were fixed in front of the public palace, and erected in their place the most holy Name of Jesus, formed with rays in a circle of brass

gilt, as may still be seen. The crucifix which the Saint employed in his sermons is kept with great veneration by the Confraternity of the Dead in this city, and the pulpit from which he preached is preserved in the cathedral, where it is still used by preachers.

S. Bernardine was at last to leave his country to carry the gospel to other cities, according to the mission which he had received. It is related that, when he left the pulpit on the 10th of June, all the city bells were rung, and trumpets and other instruments sounded at the blessing which he gave the people. The people could not resign themselves to his loss, and, to the great distress of his humble heart, he was followed by a countless multitude as far as the river Arbia, four miles from Siena, on the road to Arezzo. Bernardine then passed some time in making the round of the district, teaching the rough inhabitants how to live in the holy fear of God ; and in this task he adapted himself to their gross understanding by homely words and material images, thus making himself all to all, in order to gain all to God. At last he arrived at Arezzo, another Tuscan city, which lies in a large and fair plain, and was formerly much injured by the Goths and Lombards.

Whilst proclaiming the Divine Word to the people there with his usual fervour, and leading them from vice to virtue, he learnt that there still flourished amongst them a remnant of heathenism, to eradicate which at once called forth all the ardour of his zeal. Outside the city, in a wood, there had existed from Pagan times a fountain, which had been consecrated by the heathens to Apollo, and was commonly called the mysterious fountain; this was even then held in

such veneration that the people, not only of Arezzo, but of the neighbourhood, repaired to it as men used to frequent the shrines of idols, either to obtain oracles, or cures for their afflictions. Children were plunged into this spring with sundry vain observances and offerings, that they might be protected from misfortune, and, as it were, purified by this new kind of baptism; and spells and idolatrous rites were employed, to the dishonour and contempt of Catholic faith.

Bernardine attacked with all the strength of his spirit this worship which the ignorant people were paying to the devil; and preaching in the square to a great multitude there assembled, he made use of the most vehement language, and enabled them to perceive the great error of their conduct, and to detest the frauds of the enemy, encouraging them at last to go with him, and to destroy this impure dwelling-place of the malignant spirit. Then Bernardine, taking a cross, went forward with all the clergy and people, who followed him under the banner of the cathedral. But they no sooner approached the grove than the demons, conscious of the attack about to be made on them, suddenly raised so fierce a storm of wind and rain that it seemed violent enough to convulse the whole earth, to tear up trees from their roots, and to rend the venerable banner of the procession into a thousand pieces.

Bernardine, however, did not lose courage; but, filled with a lively faith, he animated the people, and exposing to them the arts of the enemy, gave the example by taking up an axe, and cutting down the trees; he then struck at the infamous shrine with a hammer, and, being assisted by the crowd, now in-

flamed to rage, he destroyed the altar and the fountain, filling it up with stones, upon the top of which he planted the cross which he had brought with him, and which to this day is preserved with great veneration in the church which was subsequently built on the spot, and dedicated in honour of the Saint. Bernardine, not long after, foreseeing that where iniquity had abounded grace would superabound, laid a great stone on the site of the fountain, on which was carved a figure of the Blessed Virgin. This began to be distinguished for miracles, so that the people pressed to make offerings and vows at it, and a church was erected, under the title of S. Maria delle Grazie. The author of this good work did not cease to assist it, for he obtained from Eugenius IV. an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines for the faithful who should visit this church on its feast, the 8th September.

The people of Arezzo were not ungrateful for this great service, for they built for Bernardine and his order, in their desire to retain him permanently with them, a pious monastery at Sargiano, only two miles from Arezzo, which was dedicated in honour of S. John. Bernardine, many years after, preached the Lent in Arezzo, and whilst he was one day at this church of S. Maria delle Grazie, to which he had summoned the people, probably to discourse of our Blessed Mother's glories, the Saint standing in the cemetery in the open air, to satisfy the immense assemblage of people, a violent shower of rain began to fall, which made every one think of going away. The preacher however, full of confidence, having exhorted the people to pray to God with him that he might finish his discourse, made the sign of the cross

towards the clouds, and the rain at once ceased. After the sermon, when the people had barely regained the city gates, a heavy storm arose, with a copious shower of rain, so that every one acknowledged that the rain had been suspended in the air by the merits and prayers of the holy preacher.

God was pleased to manifest the holiness of Bernardine by another miracle in this place, for as he was preaching, a pious matron, a sister of the third order of penance, who was present, saw that with his words there issued from his mouth a round globe, which was at one time white as snow, then green, and then again red as blood. These colours were symbolical of the Saint's purity of intention in preaching, of his confidence in God that He would give power to his words, and of the ardent charity with which he laboured for the good of souls.

Here we must not omit to mention how Bernardine, whilst continually employed in destroying vice, and bringing sinners back to penance by his fervent preaching, never ceased to provide for the greater progress of religion by promoting the Observance. Many persons at various times, attracted by the good odour of his virtues, passed from convents of relaxed observance to small, but pious houses, where a life of severe poverty was maintained, and, putting themselves under Bernardine's rule, daily augmented the institute of Observance. In the year 1414 that great man, and second pillar, as it were, of the Observantine Institute, S. John of Capistran, embraced its rule in a striking manner. This holy man, always desirous of making further progress in virtue, at last met with S. Bernardine as his guide and preceptor; and it would be hard to describe the profit which he

derived from his guidance, and from the illustrious example of his life. It is enough to say how blessed is the intercourse of good men, where the will of teacher and pupil is bent to one and the same end—the one in assisting, the other in drawing profit. The minds of Bernardine and John were in harmony, because both were united in virtue. John remained with Bernardine as his disciple for a year, and followed him faithfully in order to learn the method which he pursued in preaching; afterwards they obeyed each other in turns for three years, and contracted a holy and intimate friendship, the effects of which will be developed in the sequel.

CHAPTER XVI.

BERNARDINE GOES TO ASSISI, AND THENCE TO PERUGIA, WHERE HIS PREACHING IS CROWNED WITH GREAT SUCCESS.—HE PREACHES IN OTHER TOWNS OF UMBRIA.

THE Feast of S. Mary of the Angels, called the Portiuncula, was approaching. It begins from the vespers of the 1st of August, and continues till sunset on the next day, drawing to Assisi an innumerable concourse of people from all parts of Italy, who come to obtain the great indulgence granted to the seraphic S. Francis by Christ Himself in favour of the faithful. Bernardine, who was in the neighbourhood, wished also to be present at this solemnity; and, having repaired to Assisi some days before its celebration, he preached there with his

usual fervour, and with great benefit to the people, reconciling the minds of the citizens, who had brought the unhappy town to ruin by their civil strife. It is extremely probable that the Saint preached in the church of the Portiuncula, as is the custom to this day, three days before the Feast, to dispose the people, by a sincere sorrow for their sins, to a true conversion and a fruitful reception of the indulgence. The concourse of people that gathered in Assisi and its neighbourhood on this occasion, partly moved by the desire of seeing the great preacher, partly to obtain the indulgence, appeared so vast that it was supposed by those who had to provide for their subsistence to exceed the number of 200,000 souls.

We find Bernardine, about the same time, in 1425, effecting great wonders in Perugia, a city of Tuscany, but subject to the Papal authority, ten miles from Assisi, from which place we must suppose that the Saint went there. In this city Bernardine always lived in the convent of S. Francis, without the city towards the north, standing on the side of a pleasant hill, not far from the gate of S. Angelo. The venerable Brother Paul Vignozzi of Foligno introduced the Observance into this house, which was amongst the first that received it; and here the Blessed Giles, the companion of S. Francis, was visited by S. Louis, King of France, in the garb of a pilgrim. From this house S. Bernardine walked into the city, where the pulpit was placed ready in the square, and, after having celebrated Mass on the spot before a great multitude of people, he mounted the pulpit to preach, with the Precious Blood of our Saviour still upon his lips.

It would be difficult to picture the evils which Ber-

nardine, by his preaching, banished from this town, and the good which he established there. The cruel and inveterate hatred and jealousy which the citizens of Perugia kept up against one another, was especially promoted by those who had the government of their Republic. Vices of every sort, and of the most grievous character, prevailed there—pride in dress, gambling, unbecoming freedom between the sexes, and superstition in its various branches. The Saint left no stone unturned, nor art unemployed, to detach the people from this loose method of life, and bring them to a sincere union, in which love and charity might reign sweetly in those hearts which had hitherto been embittered by the fierce venom of deadly hate. But a vice which had become nature to the Perugini was strong enough to resist the fiery darts of S. Bernardine's discourse, and whilst he held up before their eyes the great loss which this vice was inflicting on them, and the far greater suffering it would entail in the next world, crowds were still unmoved to repentance.

The man of God then thought of adopting a stratagem to gain them. He promised that on a future day he would show them the devil. With this idea the people, moved by curiosity, attended in great crowds for many days to hear the Saint preach, and to see the evil one. Bernardine, meanwhile, secretly redoubled his prayers, and added to the sufferings which he inflicted on his emaciated body, in order to obtain help from the Father of mercies in favour of the obstinate Perugini. Some days having elapsed, the Saint at last told them that he had more than kept his promise to them, for whereas he had engaged to make them see a devil, he had actually shown them many ;

then, animated by the Spirit of God, he cried out with tremendous power—"Look upon one another, and you will behold devils, who do the work of the devil. For it is written in the holy gospel, that by their fruits or works you shall know them. *Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos.*" Such was the apostolic freedom with which Bernardine reproved their vices.

The citizens and people of Perugia could no longer resist the truth so powerfully presented to them by the saintly preacher; and they remained so thoroughly convinced and overcome that, after utterly extinguishing their civil dissensions, and renouncing their perverse and licentious customs, harmony and brotherly love began to flourish amongst them, and they led sober and Christian lives. Men sent to the Saint's rooms any dice and tables that they found in their houses; women gave up their ointments and false hair, vain ornaments, and other such follies, which the Saint burnt in a heap, as a trophy of the victory which they and he had gained. This was done before all the people, in the middle of the square, on the following Sunday, after Bernardine had given a discourse; and it is said that the pile contained many jewels of great value, which ladies had sent with the caps and fringes worn in that age.

S. Bernardine, further to secure a continuance of harmony amongst the chief people of Perugia, caused several new statutes to be framed and registered with the rest for the just and peaceful government of the city. Moreover, there existed an ancient custom in Perugia of holding yearly games, in which the citizens fought together, armed with clubs, and with head-pieces and shields; and in these combats several were always left dead. The zeal of Bernardine exerted

itself against these dangerous games, and he procured their entire suppression; the money which had formerly formed the victors' prizes was consecrated by a public edict, obtained by the Saint, partly to provide candles for the church services, partly to a procession, in which the statue of S. Ercolano, the patron of Perugia, was carried from the cathedral to the church of S. Dominic, and partly to the wants of the fabric of the cathedral.

Notwithstanding the great benefits which Bernardine had conferred on Perugia, in restoring to its people a peace which had been banished from them for many years, yet so unsteady and fickle are human resolutions, and so fierce are human passions, that, in the course of a few years, the ancient factions sprang up afresh, and led again to a similar state of discord. Bernardine heard of it, and moved to pity for the wretched condition of the Perugini, he at once repaired thither to preach peace to them, and unite again their estranged minds. He ascended the pulpit full of zeal, and began by saying that God, regarding their factious divisions with extreme hatred, had sent him, like an angel, to announce peace on earth to them, and to men of good will, and to exhort them always to peace. He preached four sermons only, in the last of which he made this proposal to the people: that those of good will,—that is, who desired peace, and were resolved to keep it in future with their neighbours,—should come upon his right hand, and those who would not have peace, should range themselves on his left. By God's special grace it fell out that all collected on his right hand, except one youth of rank and power, who, remaining in his place with his followers, murmured against the holy preacher, and despised the warning

thus conveyed to him from God. Bernardine then told him that, as he alone despised the words which he had spoken to the people on the part of God, he would now, on the same high authority, tell him to forgive his neighbour who had offended him, and place himself, with all his band, on the right hand with the rest, henceforward to maintain peace; otherwise, he threatened him in God's name with a great punishment, and that he should not enter his home again alive. Bernardine's words were fulfilled. The young man despised his warning, and not fearing the divine vengeance, attempted to enter his house, but no sooner touched the threshold than he suddenly fell down dead on the ground, according to the warning threat which Bernardine had publicly intimated to him.

The district of Perugia, and that of Castello, with the Duchy of Spoleto, were anciently comprised in Umbria on this side the Apennines. Our Saint spent more than a year in this province, preaching the Divine Word, and gathering a great harvest by his wonderful works, to the great glory of the faith; for, as almost all this country had been wasted by war, its inhabitants knew little or nothing of the things of God, of faith, religion, or justice.

When the Saint preached in the capital, Spoleto, all the city was moved by his instructions, and gave thanks to God for a cure which the holy man, by his blessing, wrought on a woman called Martha, the wife of Martin di Pietro, who for six or eight years had suffered so grievously that she could not get out of bed without support, nor even take nourishment, and she was frequently thought to be insane. For the Lent of 1426 Bernardine was in Gubbio, a city of the Duchy of Ur-

bino, fifteen miles from Perugia, and almost on the border of the Marca of Ancona. The Saint preached there during the whole of Lent, as he did again a few years later, at the request of Guidantonio, Count of Montefeltro, the lord of this town. The devotion of the good Count, and of his sister Anne, to the holy preacher, was very great; they bought of Peter Serano, Abbot of the convent of Santa Croce of Avellano, in the diocess of Gubbio, an estate situate in a pleasant valley near Urbino, and attached to the parish church of S. Donato. On this land they began to erect a monastery, which, with the church, they offered to Saint Bernardine and the followers of his Observance, leaving only one secular priest in the church to perform the parochial duties. Count Guidantonio, however, was snatched away by an early death, so that he could not complete this work, and his son, of the same name, first Duke of Urbino, was treacherously assassinated by his own subjects; but Frederic, another son of the Count, and second Duke of Urbino, brought the work to a termination, and the church, after Bernardine's canonization, was dedicated to him.

The Saint about this time arranged the differences that had arisen in Foligno, a city that stands in a valley at the foot of the Apennines. They had sprung from the usual source of party factions, and had forced five noble ladies of holy life, who had retired to this spot from Sulmona, in order to serve God in greater peace, to fly to some other abode. Bernardine laboured to procure their return; and, by his direction and advice, they founded a convent called S. Lucy, in which many matrons of high rank and holy virgins lived together, and attained to such perfection that

religious were afterwards taken from this house to found or reform many other convents.

Bernardine next went to Rieti, formerly a city of the Sabines, which lies halfway between Narni on the west and Aquila to the east, about fifteen miles from each of those places. Here the Saint did not fail to generate many children in Christ by the Divine Word. Whilst he was travelling through Umbria, he happened one day to arrive very hungry at a small hamlet called Monte Franco, in the diocese of Spoleto; and as a true lover of seraphic poverty, loving to deal with the lowly, he begged of a poor woman a morsel of bread for charity's sake. The poor woman was grieved at being obliged to refuse him, as she thought she had no bread at that time in her house; but being desired by the holy man to look again, and give him what remained, to her great astonishment she found the chest which she had left shortly before quite empty now full of bread, and gave Bernardine as much as sufficed to relieve his want. As the fame of the prodigy spread through the country, all the people ran after the Saint, who had hurried away, to receive his blessing. When he perceived this, for he was not yet more than a stone's throw beyond the village, he stopped, and at once addressed the crowd with great fervour of spirit in a sermon that produced abundant fruit, at the end of which he exhorted them to raise a convent for himself and his brethren; which they afterwards did, dedicating it to the Saint. God was thus pleased to show his favour to Bernardine, who exalted His Name with such toil and labour, and unweariedly promoted the interests of His glory in the conversion of souls.

Indeed, the institute of regular Observance was

greatly advanced from time to time by the saintly conduct of Bernardine. Many persons came to him, both religious and secular, desiring to be admitted to the apostolic life of S. Francis, as restored in its primitive vigour by the Saint. On this account he obtained from Pope Martin V., in the year 1426, a brief dated June the 5th, to enable him to found or accept four houses in Italy. It is recorded that, in virtue of this grant, the monasteries of Santa Croce outside Pisa, and that of Castiglione, were raised about this time; the first at the expense of Peter Nereto, a Florentine nobleman, and the latter by Thomas Fiacherino, lord of the stronghold near which it stood. Bernardine further reformed as to its spiritual condition, and repaired the structure of, the old monastery of S. Angelo de' Pantanelli, in Umbria, which stands in a thick copse of wood near the Tiber. This house had been built in the time of S. Francis, and Bernardine now introduced into it the followers of his Observance. In the same way the Saint repaired, in great measure, another house in Umbria, which stood on a steep rock, in the diocese of Narni, near the castle of S. Urbano, and in which was a cave, formerly the sacred retreat of S. Francis in his contemplations. S. Bernardine also restored a small oratory, once the habitation of S. Antony of Padua, which our Saint intended for a house of noviciate for those who entered the order, that they might here enjoy for a time holy leisure for contemplation. But the poverty of the neighbourhood rendering it impossible for the friars to find support, this holy retreat was abandoned some years later.

CHAPTER XVII.

BERNARDINE, PREACHING IN VITERBO, IS CALUMNIATED TO THE POPE, AND SUMMONED TO ROME TO ANSWER FOR HIMSELF.

FROM Umbria Bernardine, crossing the Tiber, went to Viterbo, an old and noble city of the patrimony of S. Peter, standing at the foot of Monte Cimino. In this city, the capital of its province, the holy man was received by the people with great joy, and his sermons during Lent were attended by a numerous concourse of the people of the city and surrounding country, who came in with great piety to hear him. Here too, he wrought his accustomed wonders, uniting discordant spirits in peace, introducing the frequent reception of the Sacraments, and leading into the way of salvation men who, sunk in their vices, had been walking on the road of perdition. Many virgins too, were encouraged to lead a penitential life, and many widows admitted by the holy preacher to the rule of the third order of penance of S. Francis, and thus began to live in community. As these good people required example and instruction in this life, the Saint brought four sisters of tried merit of the third order—Terenzia, Rosata, Letitia, and Orifica—from the convent of S. Anne of Poligno, and placed them together in a house near the church of S. Agnes, built at the cost of the holy women of Viterbo and their relations, and the citizens of the place. The Saint employed himself for some time in teaching and directing them in the way of the

Lord, and they thence styled themselves the Sisters of S. Bernardine. After his canonization the new church was dedicated to him, and the convent called after him. It soon increased both in size and in the virtue of its inhabitants, and, amongst others, S. Giacinta Mariscotti, in the seventeenth century, was renowned as a splendid example of sanctity.

Whilst Bernardine was engaged during this Lent in producing these great works in Viterbo, God, Who desires to prove His elect by placing them, like gold, in the furnace of tribulation, in order further to purify them, and thus to make them shine with increased brilliancy, suffered Bernardine's virtue to be put to a severe test in the following way. The Saint, as we have seen, was the first who had passed from the veneration of the Name of Jesus to that of the representation of this Name, by means of those tablets on which he exposed It to the people, either painted or carved, in a cipher of gold characters, surrounded by rays like the sun. At the end of his preaching, he used to make the people pay reverence on their knees to this representation, thus to remind them of the Saviour, Who was exhibited to them in this cipher denoting His Name, and Who was entitled to all their honour, respect, and gratitude for having wrought their redemption and salvation ; and, by thus inculcating this devotion, he impressed it on their hearts, from which it had well-nigh been effaced by the host of vices that then ravaged unhappy Italy. This pious practice of Bernardine was faithfully followed by other preachers of his institute and by his disciples, who, besides exposing these tablets from their pulpits, also instituted processions after the Saint's example, in which they carried the same images before the cross, although

that sacred symbol of our redemption commonly precedes every other image.

Great and various were the contests and differences that arose in regard to this novelty, many praising, and many others condemning it. To the simple-hearted and pious it seemed a thing that strongly excited devotion. The learned rather regarded it as a kind of idolatry, or, at least, a custom that tended to superstition, saying that people venerated these letters more than Christ, Who was signified by them. The agitation on this point daily increased in different Italian towns, and the party opposed to the practice acquired fresh strength. Brother Manfred and many of his adherents took the chief part in the movement, and, armed with false zeal, endeavoured to retort upon the holy preacher in double measure whatever he said, when the occasion offered, in reprobation of the erroneous opinion advanced by Brother Manfred that Antichrist was come. Thus they often called the Saint the messenger of Antichrist. They said that he was a rough man, wholly devoid of any learning, that his speech was rude and unpolished, that he knew forty sermons, and no more ; nor did they scruple at last to pretend to regard him as a heretic ; and this calumny they propagated, not only by words, but in writing, publishing books and treatises against him, his doctrine, and his disciples.

Amongst the authors of these productions was one Brother Andrew Billio, a Milanese of noble birth, belonging to the order of hermits of S. Augustine, who wrote a work, entitled " Of the Disciples formed by the teaching of Brother Bernardine of Siena, of the Order of Minors." The virtues and holy works of Bernardine were manifest as the sun, and this writer,

although tainted with blind envy, could not but acknowledge and praise them. But in this work he vigorously attacked the holy practice and method of the Saint in preaching the Divine Word. From this he went on to describe the scandals that had arisen in Italy from the ill-regulated zeal of the Saint's disciples, studying, in fine, to convey the impression that such superstition ought to be far removed from the teaching of virtue and the promotion of piety. Under these honied words the poison was concealed ; and indeed all the antagonists of Bernardine covered their treachery with the cloak of a just zeal, whilst in truth the cause of their speaking and writing was nothing but a secret emulation, which made them jealous of his reputation and anxious to sully it, and to make him lose that influence which, to the great promotion of God's glory, he possessed with the multitude. Zealous preachers who discharge the duty of missionaries are commonly subject to these attacks ; because the Spirit of God, Who speaks and works in them, cannot be known by those who are full of the spirit of self only ; hence, with minds full of prejudice, they proceed to attack the doctrine or method followed by the holy preacher to excite people to fervent piety ; and this invidious work is usually prosecuted with incredible ardour, as if its actors had no more important matter for reform in their own or others' lives whereon to exercise their zeal.

Thus it happened with the teaching and invention of Bernardine regarding the adorable Name of Jesus. The matter went so far that some of his adversaries, who listened daily to his preaching in order to catch him in some expression which might furnish

subject of accusation against him before the tribunals of the faith, having declared that, in the praises which he bestowed on the Name of Jesus, he had uttered many things not conformable to the truth of the doctrines of Catholic faith (which were, in fact, but the false comments and sinister interpretations furnished by themselves), and being now unable to resist the envy and spite that consumed them, carried their complaints in the year 1427 to the Court of Rome, and, with great warmth and zeal presented to Pope Martin V. a string of charges against the pious Bernardine. They amounted to this, that Brother Bernardine was the inventor of a new heresy in the Church, and that he induced people to commit idolatry by his exposition and adoration of certain strange and unknown tablets, on which was carved the sun, and, in the centre of the sun, strange marks of magic character and spells. On the first appearance of this accusation, concocted with such artful dexterity, the Pope was much excited, and summoned Bernardine immediately from Viterbo to Rome to answer the charge.

In the meanwhile, the impression made on the people by the report of this novelty, and by the slander and detraction with which the impious and factious endeavoured to ruin the good fame of the saintly preacher, may easily be imagined. On receiving the summons, he at once broke off his course of preaching, and, ever ready to obey the Apostolic commands, having as his protectors Christ and the seraphic S. Francis, he set out for Rome, rejoicing that he was made worthy to suffer injuries for the love of Christ, and happy in the testimony of his conscience. Many of the nobles of Viterbo, and a great number of the common people,

insisted upon attending him to Rome, despite his resistance to this mark of honour. Christ, for Whose Name Bernardine was slandered, awaited him at the place to which the jealousy of factious rivals had brought him for punishment and confusion, in order to render him more glorious and exalted.

END OF BOOK II.

BOOK III.

BOOK III.

PERSECUTIONS AND LABOURS UNDERGONE BY S. BERNARDINE.—NEW FRUITS OF HIS APOSTOLIC MINISTRY.—HIS LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

BY THE POPE'S COMMAND BERNARDINE'S TEACHING IS EXAMINED.—S. JOHN OF CAPISTRAN COMES TO ROME FOR THE DEFENCE OF OUR SAINT.—THE AFFAIR OF THE HOLY NAME IS TRIED, AND BERNARDINE'S CAUSE TRIUMPHS. — THE SEQUEL OF THIS AFFAIR.

THE persecution raised against Bernardine may be regarded as that heaviness in the air which precedes thunder, and announces the storm that is about to fill the heavens. Whilst the Saint was travelling to Rome, those who had been filled with prejudice by his rivals looked forward to his coming as to that of a heretic. Some added that he would be burnt, and the feeling of the ignorant populace, ever hasty in its judgment, was against the Saint. As soon as he had entered the city he was pointed at in the streets, and some, with loud laughter, said to one another, "Look at the heretic, this is he." Bernardine heard and bore everything with a peaceful soul. Followed by this bitter mockery

and unjust censure, he at last presented himself at the feet of the Pope, by whom he was received with an air of severity. His Holiness said that if the matter proved to be as stated in the denunciation presented against him, he should certainly atone for it by a severe punishment; that meanwhile he must abstain from preaching to the people or showing his tablet; and, finally, the Pope told him by no means to venture to leave Rome until, by a strict investigation, the truth or falsehood of the charges should be determined. The obedient Bernardine bowed his head to this severe injunction, waiting with unshaken mind for the help of the Lord, which he never doubted would be given him.

At the instance of his adversaries all his writings and discourses, which he had gathered from Holy Writ, from theology, and the sacred canons, were given up to a large body of learned men and theologians, amongst whom were many Dominicans and hermits of S. Augustine, to be diligently examined by them; and the Pope named a congregation of three Cardinals of eminently upright life, and distinguished for their learning, as judges of the cause. They were Antony Casini, Bishop of Siena, Cardinal of the title of S. Marcellus; Antony Cornaro, a Venetian, of the title of S. Chrysogonus, and Bishop of Bologna, of which see, however, he had never taken possession, and which he had resigned in 1412; and Nicholas degli Albergati, Cardinal of the title of Santa Croce, and Bishop of Bologna, who had acquired distinction as a legate. After a rigorous examination they found nothing that deserved reproof or punishment. But this was not enough to terminate the cause, and, as the legal

formulas required the continuance of the process, a day was named, on which the accusers, at a solemn assembly, were to accuse Bernardine of the heresy imputed to him, and he should answer their charges. On account of the number of his adversaries, Bernardine was allowed to choose amongst his friends any whom he should deem most fit to assist him in the trial.

Whilst matters were progressing thus at Rome, the partisans of Brother Manfred, as if, before entering the lists, they had already gained the day, had framed rules which prescribed to all confessors over whom they exerted influence, not to absolve in confession any one who should keep this glorious Name written or painted in his house; and what seems more strange and detestable still, when any lay brothers of this party went through the streets begging, they would cry out loudly in the squares and at the doors of the houses, "Away with the images of Jesus!" causing their accomplices to bring them all writings or paintings of the holy Name, which, with supreme contempt and insult to Christ, they then burnt, as if they had been either magical characters, or watchwords and badges of heresy. In the same way they scraped off this Name wherever they found it painted or engraved on the walls.

Bernardine wrote to one of the Cardinals, the legate of Bologna, concerning these shameful proceedings, complaining and lamenting with justice that whereas he and his disciples had excited a most fitting and holy devotion to this holy Name through all Italy with many toils and hardships, these men, in this strange way, employed every effort to efface the memory of that Name and to bring It to shame. But

as any thing wrong easily finds credit from the want of Christian charity which prevails in the world, and by the same fault is rapidly circulated from mouth to mouth, so now people wrote to their distant friends about this novelty, with disparagement of the Divine Name and detraction of the holy preacher's credit, treating the subject according to the false opinion which engrossed their minds : and thus it happened that such as had learnt from Bernardine the pious custom, either of engraving the holy Name, or of writing it at the head of their letters, alarmed at this report of a new heresy, changed their style, and to the Name of Jesus added that of Christ. Amongst these was Francis Barbaro, who for this act received the congratulations and applause of Poggio, a learned Florentine, who was ill-disposed towards the members of Bernardine's Observance, and leaned to the side of his enemies. This man did not scruple to congratulate Barbaro in a letter which he addressed to him, for that, having forsaken that mockery of the Name of Jesus which he was wont to put at the head of his letters, he had at last become an adherent of Christ, and thus abandoned that party of rash men who, being attached to the Name of Jesus only, were in fact plotting a new heretical sect, and who laboured for the glory and exaltation of this Name with the ignorant and vulgar sort in order to draw their own profit from it, concluding that Barbaro had truly shown that he was a wise and learned man in joining the names Jesus and Christ, and not separating those words, which were indeed inseparable. Such were the sentiments which Bernardine's adversaries now expressed with regard to him and his disciples.

The tidings of Bernardine's misfortune, and of the

trial which was to take place, had reached Naples, where S. John of Capistran was preaching at the request of the Queen Joanna, who entertained a high regard for him. The Saint no sooner received the intelligence than he abandoned the ministry of preaching and set out for Rome, in order to assist his holy master. Other disciples of the Saint, men distinguished for holiness and learning, took the same step, hastening from various parts to the defence of a cause in which they felt a common interest. S. John of Capistran went to Aquila to collect his writings and papers, and, having caused a handsome tablet to be made with the holy Name painted between golden rays, he rapidly passed on to Rome, and arrived, accompanied by many of the citizens of Aquila, on the very day appointed for the great trial.

On entering the gates, he fastened the sacred tablet to the point of a lance, and, relying on Divine grace and the invincible power of the holy Name, proceeded through the streets of Rome in a sort of triumph, followed by strangers and citizens, whose numbers kept on increasing, and who sang together hymns of praise of the holy Name, until in this fashion they reached the Vatican. It is impossible to relate how astonished and overwhelmed the rivals and enemies of Bernardine were at the sight of this generous act, which was so contrary to their expectation. Even the Pope and Cardinals, seeing the assembled multitude thus ardent in this devotion, taking counsel on the matter, resolved to defer the cause to another day, being afraid that the Saint's opponents might at that moment be insulted by the people ; and, having empowered Capistran to speak

in his favour, Bernardine withdrew for the present to the convent of his order.

On the appointed day very many prelates, theologians, and religious of every order met in the Vatican Basilica, the Saint's adversaries having fifty-two doctors in theology from one order only, and ten from another on their side, and S. Bernardine being supported by the learned voice of Capistran alone, the rest of the theologians and learned men of the Saint's institute who were present having reposed all the weight of defence on that saintly man, justly thinking that it would be injurious to the truth, for which Bernardine was to answer, if they made a show of supporting it too much.

The discussion, which derived solemnity from the presence of the Pope, the Cardinals, and an innumerable host of spectators, opened with the recital of the charges against Bernardine for his new invention of carving and painting the Name of Jesus in certain characters, &c.; and the Saint's opponents rose to support these articles by studied and subtle arguments, which, although really unsound, bore an appearance of truth. They attempted to draw from the Holy Scriptures, according to their own interpretation, and from the Fathers and sacred canons, a condemnation of the practice in question, as being a vain and superstitious thing, leading the people into idolatry. The vigour with which they maintained their part exceeded all expectation, and seemed to render it almost impossible to emerge safely from such craftiness. But his opponents were unable to withstand the wisdom and Spirit of God which spoke in Bernardine; for as he answered from the same Scripture, Fathers, and canons, and from theological reason-

ing to their objections, he so fully satisfied every one that the Pope readily perceived that the whole accusation had proceeded from malice and envy; and he plainly understood that neither in act nor word had the Saint ever erred in any point against God and His law, or against Holy Writ, the Fathers, the Church, or the Apostolic See; and a definitive sentence to that effect, which the judges appointed in the cause pronounced upon it, left the Saint victorious over his enemies. It was then that his most learned follower, John of Capistran, in order that the innocence of his holy master might appear yet more conspicuously, rose up, with the Pope's permission, to speak in his favour and confirm his teaching. One by one he took up his opponents' arguments, no less than eighty-five in number, and confuted them with such learning and eloquence that he clearly exposed their worthlessness, and the Court of Rome remained fully satisfied of Bernardine's innocence, and astonished at the eloquence of S. John.

The Pope, thus convinced that truth lay with Bernardine, put an end to the discussion which had put the Saint's enemies to confusion, but had shed great glory upon him, as he now was not only purged from every stain and suspicion of heresy, but further proclaimed to be a faithful confessor and true preacher, both in word and work, of Catholic truth, and a most obedient son of the Holy Roman Church. Next day the Pope summoned him to his presence, received him with marks of kindness, and, imparting his blessing to the holy man, gave him ample faculties for preaching the Divine Word everywhere, as well as leave freely to show the people the most sweet Name of Jesus; and his Holiness encouraged him to prosecute unweariedly,

as he had commenced, the apostolic ministry to the salvation of the people of Italy. Some say that on this occasion the Pope ordered him to employ the crucifix as well as the holy Name in his pious work. In order to publish by public proofs the innocence of Bernardine, and, by attaching credit to his teaching and person, to produce a more abundant harvest of souls, his Holiness ordered that, as great insults had been offered to the Saint and his cause in Rome, a most solemn procession should now take place, at which all the clergy and people were to assist, and in which S. John of Capistran, with holy pomp, should bear the glorious standard of the adorable Name amidst sacred hymns and all signs of joy, thus concluding his triumph as before the struggle he had anticipated it.

When the news of this happy consummation was diffused through Italy, the same ceremony that had taken place in Rome was performed in many other cities which had been sanctified by the Saint's preaching. The people of Florence in particular, after the solemn procession, caused the august Name, which they had graven on a stone in golden characters, surrounded by rays of light, to be set on high on the façade of the Church of Santa Croce, as a perpetual trophy of the victory just achieved. The people of Siena did the same in honour of the Saint, their fellow-citizen. From this time the custom of painting or carving the holy Name on the church fronts, and walls or doors of houses, became still more common, and may still be seen in many places.

In memory of this triumph, all the Order of Minors celebrate yearly, on the 14th of January, the Feast of the most holy Name of Jesus, which they keep with

a special office, by favour of a grant of Pope Clement VII. in 1530. That Pope completed what the Ven. Brother Bernardine de Bustis, a distinguished preacher and faithful follower of the institute of S. Bernardine, had begun in the reigns of Sixtus IV. and Innocent VIII., employing every effort to procure the celebration of this Feast in the universal Church, with the particular office composed by S. Bernardine. The endeavours of the holy friar remained for many years without success; but Clement VII. enriched the Feast with copious indulgences, which he granted to all who should recite the office of it, like those which are gained in the Feast and Octave of Corpus Christi. From the Order of Minors this Feast and office passed afterwards by authority of the Sacred Congregation of Rites to that of the Carthusians, to the kingdom of Spain, and other places. The city of Siena obtained permission to celebrate it throughout its diocese in 1582, and Florence, with its territory, in 1684. Finally, at the request of the Emperor Charles VI., this Feast and office were extended to the whole Catholic Church by Pope Innocent XIII. in 1721, to be kept on the second Sunday after Epiphany. Thus that fierce storm of tribulation, which had threatened with its impetuous blast to extinguish the fire of devotion towards the holy Name, which had been kindled in men's breasts by Bernardine, conduced in the end to make it more revered, and to give eternal honour to the holy preacher who had so energetically extended its glory.

CHAPTER II.

BERNARDINE PREACHES IN ROME BY THE POPE'S
COMMAND.—HE WORKS MIRACLES.—REFUSES THE
SEE OF SIENA.

POPE MARTIN V., not satisfied with having honoured Bernardine by these marks of esteem, of which we have made mention, and which conveyed his approbation of the Saint's doctrine, further desired that he should preach at his pleasure in the Basilica of S. Peter. This Bernardine did for eighty days, with great applause, and equal fruit; and he then extended his preaching to other churches in Rome. God on this occasion poured forth such grace on the Saint's lips and words, that all Rome flocked to hear him as if he had been an angel of God, and in proportion to the odium which had before been attached to his name, was the general veneration which it now excited. It is said that even the Cardinals and the Pope himself were sometimes present at his sermons. At first indeed, some persons made light of him, and went to hear him for curiosity's sake, or to turn him into ridicule, rather than to draw any advantage from his discourses; but they were soon obliged to alter their views, and gained such a love for him as ever after to attend his sermons constantly. Nor was his preaching without much fruit, for on the 20th of July, he burnt before the people a heap of gambling tables, cards and dice, and also loose songs, writings connected with the black art, charms, and other pieces of superstition. He also brought to the flames an infamous sorceress called Finicella, who by her witchery had murdered several children.

Bernardine also brought back many Jews to the faith of Christ, and reconciled many enemies. There existed at that time in Rome an evil custom that when any one was murdered, the murderer could not be taken until he had reached his house, and entered within certain bars which were put up before the door; and as then the pursuers might attack and take him by force, bloodshed frequently ensued. Bernardine declaimed with such power against this abuse, that these bars which stood before houses were destroyed without exception throughout Rome.

God was pleased to adorn His servant in Rome, for the confirmation of his teaching, with the grace of miracles, by means of which his words gained fresh efficacy for the good of souls. One day, whilst he was exalting the glories of the Name of Jesus with greater fervour than ever, this holy Name, according to the testimony of many persons, was seen to appear over him, in the form in which the Saint always painted it, amidst most brilliant rays. A woman, called Andrea, who had a grandson of five years old, grievously tormented with the falling sickness, hearing the great things which were told of this saintly preacher, and trusting in his merits, brought this child to him one day, begging the Saint to intercede with the Lord for his health, and to heal him. Bernardine smiled on hearing her request, and answered that it was for the Saints and friends of God to do such things; but however, that she should go to the child's parents, and that they should make a good confession of their sins, and then she might return with the child to him, for he would pray meanwhile to God for the sick boy's health. His directions were obeyed, and next day the woman appeared full of

lively faith, with her grandson, at the convent of Aracoli, where the servant of God was living; and Bernardine, after a short prayer, made the sign of the cross upon the child with such virtue that it became instantly sound and well, and was never after troubled with its malady.

Bernardine, during his stay at Rome, was once unwell, and a pious lady sent him some lozenges. But the Saint, who was accustomed to treat his body with rigour, and desired rather to afflict it than to stoop to its gratification, told the person who brought him this present that he had no occasion for it, but bid him go to a street which he named, and there find a poor man who lay in bed very sick, to whom he should give the lozenges, telling him that Brother Bernardine sent them to him, in order that in the adorable Name he might eat them, and be restored to health. Wonderful to relate, the sick man had no sooner tasted them than all his infirmities left him, and he rose up strong and well.

About this time the bishopric of Siena became vacant by the translation to the See of Grosseto of the Bishop, Antony Casini, who had been raised to the purple. The people of Siena, of both orders, lay and ecclesiastical, the clergy, the chief men of the district, and the Governor, all fixed their eyes at once upon Bernardine, as in every way the most worthy person for the vacant dignity. They therefore sent envoys three times to Pope Martin V., and their prayer was supported by the instances of the Cardinal, their late Bishop, he and they not knowing how much more glorious their city was to become through the name of Bernardine when dead, than through his administration when living.

However, their prayer was heard, and Bernardine was named to the See of Siena ; his consent was alone wanting to the termination of the affair, and he was accordingly summoned to accept the dignity conferred upon him. Bernardine obeyed the summons lest it should be thought that he made light either of the dignity itself or the good-will of his fellow-citizens ; and throwing himself at the feet of the Pope, he expressed his gratitude to those who had procured him such an honour, greatly extolling the episcopal dignity, and all who worthily held it, by vigilantly and zealously attending to the salvation of the souls entrusted to their charge. The Saint then alleged many reasons why he could not accept the proffered dignity, judging, he said, that it was neither expedient for himself, his neighbours, or the Church of Siena.

Amongst other things, he quoted the saying of S. Paul, who said of others that he who desireth the bishopric desireth a good work, but of himself that God had not sent him to baptize, but to preach the gospel ; that thus Bernardine thought it would be more serviceable for him to journey up and down the country, teaching the people a Christian life, than to confine himself to the circuit of a single diocese ; that having chosen for himself, by Divine inspiration, the poor and lowly life of S. Francis, he did not wish to exchange it for another, and as the splendour and pomp that attends the episcopal dignity did not dazzle his eyes, he would rather continue in his present lot till the end of his life, as being a safer state, and one wherein he could with greater fidelity observe his promises to God ; and this he did with greater good-will, because he knew how incapable he was of bearing the weight of this dignity, which is exposed to numberless cares.

In fine, he said everything with all the humility and earnestness of which he was master, in order to excuse himself from accepting the offered dignity, notwithstanding that the Pope and Cardinals exhorted, and the envoys from Siena urged him with prayers and tears to give his consent. At last the Pope accepted his excuses; and Bernardine, rejoicing at heart, took leave of his Holiness and the Cardinals, and returned with greater fervour to prosecute the course of his wonderful preaching and holy works, having acquired a fresh tribute of general praise and respect.

CHAPTER III.

BERNARDINE'S SENTIMENTS IN REGARD TO THE DIGNITIES AND HONOURS OF THE WORLD.—HIS REFUSAL OF THE SEES OF FERRARA AND URBINO.

IF detachment from the desire of worldly distinction showed itself strongly in Bernardine's refusal of the bishopric of Siena, it appeared still more in the sentiments which he fostered concerning such honours, and the inflexible constancy with which he acted on them. The Saint considered the shortness of human life, which he signified by calling it a term of five days, and whenever he was requested to accept any honour, he was wont to say in familiar conversation that he did not wish to be detained for any time, however short, of his sojourning, from running swiftly, freely,

and unrestrainedly towards his end ; because, as he was to live but for few days, he thought it incomparably fitter and more useful to do so than to submit to the intolerable burden of distinctions.

Whilst the envoys from Siena were treating in Rome of the affair of the bishopric in his favour, and were repeating their request to Pope Martin with renewed force, Cardinal Gabriel Condulmero, of whom we have spoken above, and who was afterwards created Pope under the title of Eugenius IV., a man of gentle and affable character, but above all high-minded and prudent, who felt a particular esteem and affection for Bernardine, fearing lest the Saint, harassed by entreaties, should at last give way, and thus forfeit the reputation which he had gained with so much labour for the glory of God and advantage of souls, sent a faithful messenger to acquaint him of the negotiations that were going on regarding him, and to advise him not in any way to consent to their object, which would doubtless cause him a great injury, and plainly frustrate the labours and sufferings of his previous life. Bernardine listened with a cheerful countenance to the messenger's words, and then, taking him by the hand, thanked the Cardinal for such holy and wholesome counsel, adding that he assured him on his honour that he would never commit the folly of consenting to such a thing. He bid him therefore go, and tell the Cardinal of his feelings, and beg him to lay aside any anxiety he might feel upon the subject. From these expressions we may judge how completely Bernardine was a stranger to the dignities and honours of the world, and how ardent was the flame of Divine charity in

his heart, since, like the Apostle, he regarded all things as loss, that he might gain Christ and beget sons to Him by his holy preaching. Nor did he exhibit a less rooted contempt of the world, when, in familiar intercourse with his brethren, he answered their enquiries playfully. Once he said—"They do me an injury to press on me the bishopric of a single city, when I am received and visited wherever I go with as much respect as if I were a dignitary of the Church; surely it is better to be considered Bishop of every Italian city than of one." In the same way, with his natural cheerfulness, he answered a friend who had asked him why he had refused the bishopric of Siena—"Because," said he, "a man who is already Pope acts foolishly to come down from that eminence and become a mere Bishop." At another time a report was spread that Bernardine had been elected Archbishop of Milan. The same friend and companion brought him the tidings, and asked him if he felt inclined to accept that dignity. "No," said the Saint, "trust me I am not inclined to exchange my high position for any bishopric," meaning by his position that poor and humble life which he had enjoyed for so many years in holy religion.

We must not here omit a remarkable conversation which Bernardine held with a certain friar called Brother Angelo, or Angeluccio della Pesche, a lay brother and gardener, whom the Saint loved greatly for his simplicity. This conversation, which we relate with the same simplicity with which it is written, took place when Bernardine was elected Bishop of his native place. The Saint called Brother Angelo to him one day, and wishing to amuse himself with him, and at the same time to show him

how great is the vanity and folly of this world, of which the delusions and dangers were well known to Bernardine, told him that he had good news for him, which should afford them both great joy. The simple brother asked what this was. Bernardine replied that the Sienese had chosen him Bishop by general consent; what did Brother Angelo think? Would he not do best to accept their election? "No," answered the other, at once rejecting the idea; "no, father, do not lose in a moment your labours in teaching the people, and the fruits which you have gathered from them, for a vain good of so little weight—a false good." "What should I do, then," rejoined Bernardine, "if the people of Milan, who honour and love me more than any others, should wish me for their Archbishop? Do you think that this, too, would be a thing to refuse?" "Yes, this too," answered the lay-brother, "indeed as it is a greater honour, I think it should be refused with greater courage, unless you wish to cast eternal dishonour on yourself and all others who may come to preach after you." "What," said the Saint again, "if the Pope should name me Patriarch, think you I should not gladly accept it?" The other was much grieved at this, and said, "I see that your mind is inclined to these vain goods of the world, for which you will lose the love of the people which you have gained by such efforts, and what is more, God's grace." "And if I am made Cardinal," pursued the Saint, "do you think that a matter to neglect?" The simple brother bethought himself for a moment at the sound of so exalted a dignity. At last he said, "Yes, father, you have no time to lose; who would refuse so high an honour? Do so as you will." Bernardine, seeing that it was no longer the

time to jest, but to speak seriously, reproved him with grave words, instructing him that dignities, as they are more exalted, are more subject to evils and dangers, for which cause they should be more decidedly refused by right-minded men. For himself, he said, he would refuse not only the see of Siena, but any other greater distinction, whether of Archbishop, Patriarch, Cardinal, or Pope itself; and that he esteemed himself far richer and happier in the humble and poor life of S. Francis than in any great and sublime dignity.

The resolution of S. Bernardine was again tried within a few years. Peter Bojardo having renounced the bishopric of Ferrara in 1431, his see was offered to Bernardine. But from so firm a soul nothing could be obtained, the Saint judging it far safer to venerate this dignity, than to possess it. Hence the Blessed John Tavelli of Tossignano, of the Order of Jesuats, was chosen in his stead, whose soul was seen by S. Catherine of Bologna mounting directly to glory on the 24th of July, 1445. In the same way, when the see of Urbino was vacant in 1435 by the death of Brother James de' Balardi, or Arigoni, of Lodi, a theologian of great renown, who belonged to the order of S. Dominic, Pope Eugenius IV., who was then in Tuscany, having fled from Rome, offered this mitre to Bernardine, and even, according to some, placed it with his own hands on the Saint's head, who, however, would not accept it, but, thanking his Holiness with humility, put it aside, saying that the Pope well knew the motive of his refusing such an honour—to wit, that he might labour with greater freedom in saving souls which God has redeemed. The pious Pontiff was greatly edified by this answer. After these

events his faithful companion, Brother Vincent of Siena, happened one day to question him, as he had done at other times, whether his mind had ever felt inclined to accept any bishopric, as so many had been tendered to him, and Bernardine answered that he had not indeed ever felt the least inclination to do so—a proof of the generous detachment from every distinction of this earth that reigned in the Saint, and enabled him to resist so many brilliant attacks.

CHAPTER IV.

OF BERNARDINE'S HUMILITY.

A GENEROUS contempt for the dignities and honours of the world, arose in Bernardine from a good foundation of humility, which is the first ground-work of the spiritual building. This virtue, at once the ornament and crown of all the rest, was so fully possessed by Bernardine, that it did not allow him to think anything great or good of himself, but rather disposed him continually to keep himself down, and to seem vile both in his own and other people's eyes. Although he was sufficiently furnished with human learning, and greatly skilled in various sciences, and moreover enlightened by a special light of divine wisdom; yet he never presumed in anything on his own knowledge, or extolled himself above others; he even ranked himself beneath the novices, and condescended to ask advice of his inferiors. Far from glorying in his

learning or high birth, his acts and words were simple and humble : and in his bearing and conversation he conducted himself with such simplicity and holy industry, that any one who had not known him would have judged from his outward appearance that he was the least of all, and as rude and unlearned as one of the common people. But it did not appear thus to wise and prudent spirits, who called him a learned and noble-minded man, well knowing that pride is the daughter of ignorance, the vice of a mean soul, and the mark of vileness.

In the same way, Bernardine hid the favours and gifts which he received from God, and those noble Christian virtues which adorned his soul. He knew so well how to conceal himself, that in shunning singularity in every action, in every one he rendered himself singular. He was held in such veneration by all men, that they considered themselves happy and blessed to touch the skirt of his habit. When he approached cities, villages, or towns, he was always received in a sort of triumph by crowds of people, who went out to meet him with palms in their hands ; and he received those honours with a glad and cheerful countenance, appearing much gratified with such attentions, so that he might be thought aspiring and ambitious. In truth however, firm in the sense of his nothingness, he never arrogated any thing to himself, but referred all to the glory of God, saying that he would have wished to be considered by all as a Saint, because thus he might produce greater fruits by his preaching. But when, after gaining the results which he desired, he was leaving any of these towns, and beheld himself attended with great honour and pomp, he would

go with so cast down a look, and such an expression of melancholy, that he seemed as if he were being led to execution.

Bernardine had given orders to Brother Vincent, who was for many years his inseparable companion, and whom he obeyed, suffering himself to be ruled and directed by him in the things regarding the necessities of life, that he should never venture to praise him for any act or sermon which should be attended with unusual success ; but that he should rather remark his defects and point them out to him for correction. If it sometimes happened that he had been confused in thinking or saying one thing for another, although a wilful falsehood never issued from his mouth, when he learnt his error, he was so ready to give way, that he either silently rejoiced in the confusion which might result, or openly owned that he had been wrong ; he never relied on himself, or presumed on his own opinion, but was ready to refer to others, and to retract when necessary. In the conclusion of his Lenten sermons on the Christian religion, after having prayed and entreated God mercifully to forgive him if he had anywhere spoken otherwise than as He desired, he goes on to declare that if any one piously wished to correct him whilst he lived in this frail existence, he was ready to receive such correction in humility of heart, tongue, and work.

Although in public he declaimed with great vehemence against every sort of vice, yet in private he never reproved an individual, and when it was his duty to do so with his companions and inferiors, it was ever performed with mildness and gentleness. When he happened to visit the cell of any of his brethren for some necessary cause, he did it with the greatest

composure and air of submission, always walking with a tranquil and measured step, knocking lightly at the door, and not entering until he was called and desired to come in.

Bernardine rejoiced in being despised, for the humiliation which it caused. Once when preaching in Milan, he had delivered a wonderful sermon, which produced great effect and general applause. As he descended from the pulpit, a courtier of the Duke, by name Zanino Maraviglia, accosted him, and harshly reproached him for his sermon, as a shapeless piece of composition, and badly spoken. Bernardine did not answer a word, but suffered in peace this unjust abuse, so that the courtier remained much abashed and mortified.

It may be well to conclude this chapter with what the Saint has left written at the end of his first sermon, which is the introduction to his Lenten course called *The Eternal Gospel*. "I plainly see," he says, "that I am presuming on myself and the measure of my littleness; nay, it seems to me that I am presuming to scatter from an empty vase, and to dispense what I do not possess. It is indeed hard and unbecoming in one to speak of charity and love, who does not feel its power; as love does not transfuse the secrets of its sweetness from the outward to the inward part of charity, but is transmitted from within to without; as God, Who is Love, says in *S. Matthew* (ch. xii.), that the good man should dispense charity from the good treasure of his heart both to himself and others. I certainly deceive myself if I reckon myself amongst such. There will succour me however He Who gives love, and is the fulfilment of love, Jesus Christ, &c." The sentiments with which Bernardine

acknowledged his insufficiency to treat of divine love proclaimed him to be really most capable of doing so, since, being empty of himself by humility, it followed that he was full of charity. But let us accompany Bernardine on his departure from Rome, and return into Tuscany to pursue the course of his apostolic labours.

CHAPTER V.

BERNARDINE RETURNS INTO TUSCANY.—HE PREACHES THE GLORIES OF THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN IN SIENA.—PROOFS OF HIS GREAT LOVE TOWARDS HER.—IN LUCCA GOD MANIFESTS THE HOLINESS OF HIS SERVANT BY HIS GIFTS.

BERNARDINE having terminated his preaching in Rome with great applause and fruit, as we have related, went again into Tuscany for the month of August. He was received with great joy and devotion, particularly at Florence, many of its citizens congratulating him on the famous victory which he had gained over his rivals to the greater exaltation of the Name of Jesus ; and he spent several days there, rewarding them by nourishing their souls with the divine word, which, as it became daily more generally esteemed, ever rendered greater fruits. In September the Saint was at Siena, where on the 8th (a memorable day for him) he preached on the glories of the most holy Virgin. Remarkable was the fervour of Bernardine's devotion to the great Mother of God : hence, whenever he chanced to speak to the people of her sublime prerogatives, he was so much inflamed

that his face seemed like that of a seraph. One evening (the vigil of the Assumption) Brother Bartholomew of Siena, one of the Saint's companions, going into his cell according to his wont, to ask his blessing before going to bed, and opening the door, beheld the Saint sitting with a lamp lighted near his desk, his face shining, and his eyes raised to heaven. The brother asked his blessing several times without Bernardine's perceiving it, and then saw that he was absorbed in ecstacy, in contemplation of the glorious triumph of the Blessed Virgin. Brother Bartholomew, without further ado, retired to bed ; and next morning, when it was time to rise, he returned to the Saint's cell, and found him in the same position in which he had left him the night before. At last Bernardine came back to himself from this sweet rapture, and having afterwards to preach, said such great and marvellous things of the glory which Mary enjoys in heaven, that it seemed as if he had seen her with his own eyes. Indeed, whenever he spoke in honour of the Blessed Virgin, his words seemed to come from above ; and such were the reflections and thoughts that he advanced in a mystical and figurative sense, when praising Mary, that he poured forth the love with which his own breast was full, into the hearts of his hearers, and enkindled in them a tender devotion to that glorious Mother. In a word, we may safely say that as Bernardine excelled all the other preachers of his day in denouncing vice and exalting virtue, in the praises of the Blessed Virgin he surpassed himself. Moreover, he composed a very beautiful treatise, wherein he gave the rein to his burning zeal in exalting Mary ; and the same tender devotion led him to obtain the consecration of

many churches in honour of the great Virgin and Mother.

It was on this 8th September of which we were speaking that Bernardine said, when preaching to his fellow-townsmen, that he himself had been born on that same day of Mary's nativity, born again after some years on the same day by his entry into the Order of S. Francis, in which again he had made his solemn profession on the same day; that he had sung his first mass and preached his first discourse to the people on the same feast, and that for the love and grace of Mary he wished to die thereon.

Shortly after this feast, and in the same month, the Saint arrived at Lucca. This is a city of great fame, which has lived under the Republican form of government for many centuries. About the time of which we speak it had been deprived of its liberty by Paul Guinigi, who from a citizen became its tyrant. Bernardine instructed its inhabitants with such ardent charity, ever seeking rather to strengthen souls by sound teaching than to gratify men by artful subtleties and ornaments of speech, that he excited an ever-growing veneration, and the driest and hardest hearts, overpowered by the light which they received from his words, were obliged to surrender, and to become gentle and human.

The invisible results of the powerful words of the servant of God were often manifested by some visible event, as happened whilst he was preaching at S. Martin's, at Lucca, to a very numerous audience. On that occasion a certain pious citizen saw a flame as of fire issuing from the Saint's mouth, in form like one of the sun's rays, and about a cubit in width. This flame, which the same man saw

several times, threw forth brilliant sparks, which kept leaving and returning to his mouth as long as the sermon lasted. On another day, whilst Bernardine was preaching, a star of great brightness was seen to shine over his head for the space of three hours, to the astonishment of all beholders. In the same way, when preaching on another occasion in the month of October at Lucca, a great flame, as of a torch, was seen going before him as he walked through the streets.

During Bernardine's preaching in Lucca, a son of the ruler, Paul Guinigi, happened to be in the crowd of persons listening to the Saint. He was an insolent youth, and inflated with the thought that, with his father and brothers, his fortune was held in perfect security. Accordingly he was paying little attention to the Saint, who perceived this, and being enlightened from above, warned him to fix the wheel firmly on its axle, lest the car should break down. In fact, within two years afterwards, about 1429, the car of his fortune fell with no common force; a great revolution broke out, the people seized on Paul and his five sons, and sent them to Duke Philip at Milan, where the whole family perished miserably in a dungeon. In the same way, Bernardine exhorted the people of Lucca to appease the anger of God, and do penance for their sins, giving them warning of the cruel war which the Florentines were going to wage against them; and which led to the fall of Guinigi. In the warmth of preaching, he once asked them, "Do you not hear the beat of the drums rolling over the hills of Garfagnana? Do you not see the birds that shoot across the sky (meaning the bombs)? Know, however, that by Eastertide they will harm no

one.' Everything happened exactly as foretold, as we know from history.

A pious person of Lucca sent his son to the holy preacher with some provisions and two flasks of wine, as an alms. The boy, returning next day by his mother's orders to fetch the empty flasks and dishes, met a companion of the Saint, whom he asked for the things. The brother said that he had already received them, but the boy denied it, and the other went into Bernardine's cell, to find out the truth. Returning presently, he bade the boy tell his mother that she would find them all in a room up-stairs, upon such a chest. The Saint had answered rightly, and the woman found everything in that place, which made her wonder greatly that Bernardine should be acquainted with the room and the chest, as neither he nor any of his companions had ever been in her house; whence she concluded that it was in virtue of the holy man's prayers, by which he saw distant objects in spirit. Besides all these miracles, which the Saint wrought at Lucca, he healed instantaneously a poor man, who had come to him with lively faith, of a painful and troublesome malady.

CHAPTER VI.

S. BERNARDINE PREACHES AT FERRARA, REGGIO, MODENA, AND CARPI.—THEN TRAVERSES THE WHOLE OF THE ROMAGNA AND MARCA OF ANCONA.

THE people of the Romagna, otherwise the Emilia (then comprising the Bolognese territory, which was separated from it afterwards), were at the time we are

speaking of in a state of great desolation and suffering on account of the general ignorance of religion, morality, and the Church's laws, which had sprung up under the late wasting of this province by famine, plague, and war. Bernardine, ever prompted by his zeal to gain souls, came from Tuscany to begin his mission in this country. But before advancing further, he stopped to preach at Ferrara for the second time, in 1428. He was received by the Marquis with great joy, and heard by the people with reverence and advantage. Amongst many conversions which ensued, was one of a trader, who, being moved by the power of the Saint's words, and then directed by him, determined to give the tenth part of his gains to the poor, and from that time forward to practise his trade honestly and uprightly. It chanced that the Saint, returning many years later to Ferrara, found this man richer than before, with a large increase of property ; and asking him how things had gone with him since they last met, the other told him that from the time he had resolved to live well and deal justly in his business, God had favoured him in all his enterprises, and made them turn out well. The Saint made use of this occurrence in his sermons, saying that God allows good merchants, who live in fear of Him, to enjoy good fortune, and increase their wealth, to the confusion of the bad ; and that little riches avail more to an honest trader, than plenty to the dishonest man, for these vanish suddenly, and pass into smoke, according to the sentence, "the third heir shall not enjoy ill-gotten goods."

When the Saint had ended his preaching in Ferrara, he learnt that both the Marquis and people wished him to visit the other towns and places in the Mar-

quisate ; and accordingly, he went to Reggio, and a little later to Modena, both these cities lying on the Emilian Way. Bernardine excited in them a great devotion to the most holy Name of Jesus, which he engraved on the minds of the citizens ; he also persuaded them by his powerful language to banish intestine strife, and establish a lasting and Christian peace within their walls ; since, by Divine favour, and the wisdom of their prince, they already enjoyed a freedom from foreign wars, which was unknown to their neighbours.

When S. Bernardine went from Reggio to Modena, he preached for several days on a pulpit in the public square. His sermons lasted for three, and sometimes four hours together, during which the shops were shut, and every one flocked to hear him. He entirely eradicated the vice of gambling from this city, as he had previously done in many others, so that one day, before his departure from Modena, he burnt, in the middle of the square, all the implements which reclaimed gamblers had given to him, to the number of 160 tables, besides a bag of cards, dice, and such like objects ; such was the detestation and horror which he produced in the minds of the people against this vice. In the end, having strengthened the Modenese in the good life they had undertaken, and established peace amongst them, he set out to preach the Gospel in other parts.

The Saint passed through Polignago, and left one of his tablets of the sacred Name there as a present to the Ghini family. He arrived next at Carpi, a village of the duchy of Modena, belonging to the Emilian district, where he preached. During his sojourn here he lodged in the house of the Bellintani, as the con-

vent of his order was then at some distance. Whether at this time or later, perhaps after his holy death, he rendered a memorable service to the people of Carpi by his prayers, delivering them from a numerous army which threatened to sack the village, by obtaining that a dense fog should be interposed between Carpi and the enemy, so that the village was entirely lost to their sight, and escaped from injury.

It is also said that Bernardine was guardian of the convent of S. Paul in Monte, outside Bologna, and the report gains probability from his having remained for a year in the country of the Romagna on his apostolic ministry. Some cypresses are shown at the convent, which he is said to have planted; also a part of his habit, and a silver chalice which he used in saying Mass during his frequent sojournings in this house, one of the first of his Observance.

Proceeding further into the Romagna, he visited almost all the hamlets, villages, and towns of the province. Cervia, Cesena, Imola, Bertinoro, Forlì, Faenza, Ravenna, Rimini, &c. In this mission he was obliged to undergo great fatigue and labour, especially at the beginning, as he found the people hard as stones and like deaf asps, who did not care to hear anything concerning piety and religion. But Bernardine, by his gentle manners and holy prayers, succeeded at last in rendering them by degrees tractable and disposed to receive the Gospel lessons, so that before long every one ran to hear him with the greatest eagerness. We cannot doubt that such great and unwearied exertions brought him a plentiful harvest.

The people were enlightened, vices were rooted out, even the most hardened were brought back to penance, the Sacraments began to be frequented, and the holy

preacher's converts listened to his admonitions and suggestions for their establishment in a Christian life. When Bernardine had thus planted the holy fear of God in the people of the Romagna, he thought of passing on into the Marca of Ancona, where a new field opened itself to his zeal for the saving of souls. As this is a fertile province, its inhabitants gave more attention to trade and money-making than to the fulfilment of the duties of the Christian religion. The Saint, therefore, passing through the whole country, and preaching everywhere with his wonted fervour, wrought the usual wonderful results, and brought back countless souls to a right method of Christian life. We may suppose that this was the occasion of his preaching a second Lent in Gubbio.

Brother James of Monte Bradone, commonly called della Marca, was the Saint's constant attendant and scholar during his stay in this country. He had received the habit in 1416 in the monastery of the Madonna degli Angeli at Assisi, as that house had been given up in the preceding year to the followers of the Observance. Bernardine had already read the heart of Brother James, nor was the latter ignorant of Bernardine's sanctity; and by the long intercourse to which their duty led them, their friendship, which rested on conformity of sentiments and the purest charity, was greatly strengthened. Bernardine found great comfort in the holy converse of James, and he, in his turn, in the gentle and pleasant conversation of the Saint, which was like that of angels rather than of men, and caused great joy and edification to his companion. It seemed as if they could not live apart; they frequently went to gather wood in the garden together, or to beg bread, and often

travelled together. When James, who was of an austere spirit, refused to eat meat, Bernardine, with all sweetness, would sometimes beg, and sometimes bid him to take it, that he might have the requisite strength for the holy office of preaching, in which he also was engaged. The practised master did not fail to instruct James in the method he should follow in preaching, the manner of modulating his voice, adapting his gestures, and making ejaculations at the proper time. When it was necessary to make a public procession, as before the celebration of the chapters of the Order, Bernardine wished to have James as his companion to offer their prayers together to the Most High; and such was the spiritual confidence which existed between them, that their hearts lay open to each other, Bernardine willingly acquainting James with the graces which he received from God, and allowing him to use his sermons or any other thing which was permitted to their poverty. Happy friendship, and enviable intercourse, where, under the same habit and in one order, are maintained unity of sentiment and one and the same heart!*

In his mission to the Marca, Bernardine made a great acquisition to his Order. By inviting sinners to penance in his usual way, with such burning and heartfelt emotions of love that no one could withstand their power, and by exhorting men to despise the world, which betrays its lovers and most eager votaries, Bernardine effected numerous conversions. Amongst the rest was one James, a gentleman of Milan, who is supposed to have belonged to the noble family of Crivelli, and was a favourite of the Duke of

* S. James della Marca was canonized by Pope Benedict XIII. in 1726.

Milan, who highly esteemed his advice. He had probably gone into Piceno about this time, either on business of his prince, or urged by the pricks of his own conscience to consult Bernardine. The result was that he was admitted by the Saint into his Order, and attached to the province of the Marca. Guided by Bernardine's lessons, he soon rose to such perfection, although he did not long survive his religious profession, that he was favoured by God with the spirit of prophecy and the grace of working miracles; and when his body was disinterred, sixty years after his death, it was found fresh and incorrupt, as if but lately buried.

CHAPTER VII.

BERNARDINE GOES ON TO SIENA, AND PERSUADES HIS FELLOW-CITIZENS TO KEEP THE PEACE. HE MAKES THE MEN SIT APART FROM THE WOMEN AT HIS SERMONS; CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CHANGE.—HE HEALS TWO SICK PERSONS.

BERNARDINE was still in the Marca of Ancona, after having spent three years in that mission and the Romagna, when he learnt that the people of Siena were thinking of leaguings themselves with Philip Mary, Duke of Milan, and with the Genoese, who had an army under the command of Nicholas Piccinino, encamped in the valley of Elsa, near Siena, and were determined to go to war with the Florentines, lest they should share the fate of the people of Lucca. The Saint, moved by a patriotic spirit, went to Siena

without delay, and by treating in private with the principal men of the state, and in public by urging the advantages of peace and the sad consequences of the war on which they were bent, managed to obtain what he desired. This affair, in which the credit of his person and the power of his eloquence contributed much to his success, happened in 1431.

He preached on this occasion in the great church of the city, dedicated to the exalted Mother of God. The holy man was a most jealous lover of chastity in himself and others; and from this motive had introduced the pious custom, wherever he preached, of seating the men apart from the women in church, so as to remove every danger of improper conversation and looks. The church then, by his desire, was divided into two sections, one of which was filled by men, and the other by women, and in order to banish from their hearts every wrong attraction which might enter by the eyes, and thus also to secure a more devout attention to the divine word, he ordered long pieces of thick cloth tied together to be hung between the two divisions, so as to separate them like a wall. Whilst the Saint was preaching to a numerous audience arranged in the manner just described, it happened that an ill-bred young man, given to the indulgence of his disordered appetite, insolently ventured, against the wish of the servant of God that he should seat himself with the men, to place himself on the women's side, that he might indulge his sinful curiosity at pleasure. Bernardine told him mildly several times to leave that place and take his seat with the men, but to no purpose; the young man was deaf to his advice, and behaved still more improperly.

At last the Saint, unable any longer to tolerate this insolence, but full of holy zeal, one day, for the interests of God's glory, changed his gentleness to severity, and announced an unhappy death to the youth, which would be inflicted on him by the divine vengeance, saying in a loud and powerful voice, "Thou who hast the presumption to sit in that place against my wish, thou who, under a splendid garb, bearest vice in triumph, listen : I fear that thou wilt perish miserably by a cruel death." It was no simple threat, but a prediction to be fulfilled very soon ; for in that very year the young man was taken in Ancona and condemned to death for his enormous offences, and lost his head by the hand of the executioner.

It was either at this time, or on some other occasion of Bernardine's preaching at Siena, that God was pleased in this city also to give health to two sick persons, in testimony of the Saint's merits. A woman who was suffering under an incurable malady had conceived so great a devotion to the holy preacher, that she believed she should certainly recover her health if she could only have the good fortune to touch the hem of his habit. She accordingly fixed a time and place for carrying out her design, and setting herself in a street through which the Saint used to pass on the way to and from his pulpit, quietly stood awaiting him. When she saw him passing close by, she suddenly stood forth full of faith, and throwing herself at his feet, touched the skirt of his habit. At first Bernardine was somewhat disturbed at the unexpected touch of this woman, but then understanding the fervour of her faith, suffered it peaceably ; and by this means the woman at the same moment regained her health.

A like grace was given to a paralytic in the same city. This man, being quite unable to use his limbs, was laid every day in a bed before Bernardine by his relations, who were moved by the great faith they had in him. This happened for many days, and at last the sick man, having one day received the blessing of the holy father after his sermon, felt his limbs restored to their former strength, and himself entirely sound and well.

These many and great miracles, which excited a general veneration in the people for the Saint, and an eager desire to hear him preach, could not, however, open the eyes of his enemies, which were fast closed by the darkness of envy. God kept His servant exercised that by such means he might make greater progress in piety; as it is with the trees in spring, which expand and spread forth their leaves and fruit at the breath of the spring winds, so holy souls, under the breath of persecutions, open their hearts, and are roused to make greater advances in virtue.

CHAPTER VIII.

BERNARDINE SUFFERS FRESH INSULTS AT SIENA, BOLOGNA, AND ROME, BUT THE POPE DEFENDS HIM, AND APPROVES HIS TEACHING BY A BULL.

AFTER the distinguished triumph which Bernardine obtained in Rome to the glory of the holy Name of Jesus, as related in the first chapter of this book, it seemed as if his opponents must entirely lay aside their arms, and acquiesce in a sentence so justly pronounced in favour of the cause of this holy Name.

But owing to their impatience of his zeal, and their

burning jealousy, they would not so allow it. Eugenius IV. having been created Pope after the death of Martin V., in the month of March, 1431, they again took the field, and collecting their forces, renewed the war with greater vigour and warmth than before. Having appealed from the former judgment, they first obtained that the cognizance of the cause should be committed to Dominic di Capranica, Cardinal Deacon of the title of S. Maria *in via lata*, intending, if possible, to catch Bernardine's perseverance in a snare. The Saint, during these transactions at Rome, had left Siena, where he had inculcated, as usual, the veneration due to the holy Name, and probably taken his way to the Marca to put the finishing stroke to his mission. This furnished his enemies with a subject of accusation, and they publicly denounced him as a disseminator of errors, and a man to be no longer heard, but punished. Bernardine's friends lost no time in acquainting him with the state of affairs, and the Saint returned in haste to Siena. His own reputation was involved with the cause of God in this question, and Bernardine exposed and confuted from the pulpit the calumnies which had been put forth, and having rendered an account of his teaching with the greatest peace and tranquillity, confirmed the ancient esteem in which his fellow-townsmen held him.

His adversaries did not, however, cease to persecute him with fresh arts, and to try every way of destroying his credit. The Saint had gone from Siena to Bologna, where he preached for many days in the great church of S. Petronius with much spiritual profit and an ever growing feeling of proper reverence for the holy Name of Jesus, which he exhibited, as usual, at the end of his sermons on the sacred tablet. His

doctrine was received with pious feelings by the canons of this famous cathedral, and in token of their devotion they had the holy Name painted with great cost and splendour on a large tablet, which they put up in a conspicuous place over the high altar. When his enemies beheld this, they were unable to contain themselves, but sought in various ways to indulge their resentment.

Bernardine had taken leave of the city previously to visiting some other town, when, by divine appointment, the river was swollen by the snow and rain which had fallen during these days to such a height that it was impossible for him to set out, and he remained in his convent. A certain false friar, who supposed that he was gone, meanwhile mounted into the pulpit, and with audacious effrontery began to preach the reverse of some things which the servant of God had taught, saying (as had happened to the Saint in Siena not long before) that he had spread some heretical maxims in his preaching, particularly in speaking of the most holy Name. Bernardine heard of the friar's words, and appearing again in the pulpit, preached fifteen sermons, protesting that as he was ready to die for the truth, so would he readily seal the truths which he had uttered with his blood, and that he would give way and submit, only when the opposite of what he had taught had been clearly proved to him. But the false friar would not bring forward any proofs of his assertions, for which reason he was compelled by the authority of the legate and bishop to do fitting penance for his offence, and to his great confusion and disgrace he publicly retracted in presence of the people the injurious abuse which he had heaped upon the saintly preacher.

But even this occurrence did not terminate the persecution in Bologna. Whilst Bernardine, after leaving that city, was preaching in other parts of the Romagna, Louis Pisano, one of the Inquisitors, caused the Holy Name to be erased from the tablet which the Bolognese had set over the altar, and replaced it by the image of Christ crucified. This new measure greatly disturbed the minds of the canons, and threw the people into an uproar, so that various scandals arose, which, coming to the ear of the Pope and exciting his displeasure, induced him to send a severe letter to Pisano, in which he desired him to place the same emblem which he had unadvisedly effaced on another tablet; and to set this by the side of the one on which was depicted the figure of the crucifix. After a happy victory over the enemies of the Holy Name, and entire allaying of all disputes, this tablet was removed by the Pope's order to the Church of S. Paul in Monte, outside Bologna, being carried with great pomp, and accompanied by all the clergy to that church, where it is kept with respect to this day.

Whilst these things were passing at Siena and Bologna, a fire was secretly preparing in Rome, to burst forth at last into a vast conflagration. In the beginning of the year the suit against Bernardine had been revived, as we mentioned above, nor was any art or effort spared to bring it to an end. Pope Martin V., in the Council of Constance, had granted power by letters apostolic to the Promoter of the Faith to take cognizance of the trials of any religious suspected of heresy and other crimes, and to proceed by way of enquiry with simple power *de plano* without the formality and bustle of a trial. Employing this concession, the Saint's enemies caused Michael, parish-

priest of S. Adalbert, Procurator and Promoter in the Roman court of causes touching the faith, to proceed with rigour against Bernardine and his agents, partners, and followers, as criminals suspected of heresy and other crimes, and of rash and scandalous acts. Further, they procured that judgment in this cause should be referred, without the knowledge of the Pope, to John de Casanova, of Arragon, a Dominican who had been created by Martin, but only declared in the preceding year by Eugenius, Cardinal of the title of St. Xystus. The afore-named Michael produced false witnesses, who deposed contrary to truth that Bernardine had been publicly and notoriously branded as guilty of heresy, and other crimes, and of rash and scandalous acts, with many others his adherents. For this the Cardinal cited them all to appear in his presence within an appointed time to answer for themselves, under pain of grave reproach and loss of their good name. The people of Siena received tidings of this grave affront offered to their illustrious citizen, and were moved to such indignation that they sent an envoy to Rome on purpose to treat of Bernardine's cause with the Pope. Their zeal was supported by the skilful measures of Cardinal Antonio Casini, and the Pope, being fully informed of the state of the question, revoked and entirely annulled the citation above mentioned, declaring that Brother Bernardine might remain where he was at his pleasure. Cardinal Casini sent the tidings of success in a letter addressed to the governor and another chief magistrate of the city of Siena, which is dated January 8, 1432. It was written as soon as the Pope, on discerning the malice of the Saint's accusers, had issued a bull, in which, after recalling the cause to

himself, he extols Bernardine in a strain of high praise, calling him a man of upright bearing, praiseworthy and pious life, of high integrity, and not only a most faithful Catholic and Christian, but likewise a most vigorous and severe destroyer of heresy, with other high encomiums. Thus 'did his Holiness vindicate the Saint from all the insults and affronts offered him by his maligners. The bull is produced by Father Luke Wading in the fifth volume of his annals, and is faithfully taken from the original document on parchment with the leaden seal yet attached. Such was the end of the contest, which imposed perpetual silence on the Saint's adversaries, the chief of whom ended his days by a sudden and unprovided death.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE PATIENCE AND MEEKNESS OF BERNARDINE UNDER PERSECUTION AND INSULT.

THE heroic patience and meekness which Bernardine exhibited in the midst of the many persecutions of which we have been treating, and of the different insults which he endured at various other times, attest his loyalty to God. He followed the example of the innocent and gentle Lamb of God, bearing with all, and not only praying for his unjust persecutors, but regarding them ever as cherished friends.

In addition to the mischief which his enemies, by word or act, sought to inflict on Bernardine for the

Name of Jesus, as often related above, he was sometimes greatly embarrassed by the false zeal of certain of his brethren, who, accounting themselves true followers of the institute of S. Francis, whilst in reality they did not strictly observe his rule, could not endure the endeavours of the Saint to promote with all his strength the true maintenance of that rule in his Order. He suffered often and severely, also, from others in the cause of God. Thus, when he began to preach in the cathedral of Siena, four abandoned men, regarding the Saint's general remarks against the vice with which they were infected as directed against themselves, hid sticks under their cloaks, with the intention of ill-treating the Saint after his sermon. But that foresight with which he was singularly endowed, having furnished him with a supernatural knowledge of their crime, enabled him to discover the snare without naming any one, and prudently to escape the danger.

His patience was always victorious in such circumstances, and his soul was so entirely at peace that neither indignation, nor anger, nor hatred ever succeeded in disturbing it, or in drawing from him a sharp or taunting word; on the contrary, he always exhibited a submissive spirit, and employed the mildest and most gentle language to his enemies. It is true that where his teaching was impeached, and he was treated as a heretic, he could not dissimulate or rest silent. Then he spoke, but far from employing invective or any other angry expression, he sought by every gentle means to rebut the calumny by a simple exposition of the truth of his discourses; and thus cleared himself from slander by showing that his doctrine was sound and Catholic, and himself a most obedient subject of

holy mother Church, in whose cause he underwent such great labours.

But the mind of Bernardine, and his true feelings on these occasions, cannot better be known than from his own words. If occasionally he were asked how he could tolerate the many things said and done against him, he would answer that we should leave God to act, or that God takes care of these things, or other such like expressions, by which he gave them to understand that he placed himself entirely in the hands of Providence, assured that, sooner or later, the innocence of his cause would be known, as indeed came to pass, and that God does not allow those who trust in Him ever to be confounded. At other times a sentiment of profound humility led him to say that these persecutions rendered him a great service, and that he saw that without them his soul would be in great danger of being lost. In that great humiliation which he must have endured from the charges preferred against him to Pope Martin V., as above narrated, a certain friar was bold enough to tell him that he should contrive to revenge himself on his accusers; but he received an answer truly worthy of Bernardine, that he knew not how to take vengeance on his enemies, since from the time he issued from his mother's womb he had never had an enemy.

It may be said with truth of Bernardine, in the midst of the furious assaults of persecutions and insults, that like a rock in the midst of the sea, immutably withstanding the force of the waves which beat against it from every side, so did his soul rest unmoved and tranquil, breaking by its unconquerable patience the violence of the foes who beset it. Nor

did he at any time omit to discharge the duty assigned him of holy preaching, whereby he everywhere eradicated vice and scattered the wholesome seeds of virtue; and, in the same way, he never felt himself prevented from applying to his studies. Some of his friends, wondering how, after just being abused by some one, he could enter his cell and pursue his studies, and asking him how it could be, as such an occupation required the greatest peace of mind, the Saint answered that, whenever he entered his cell, all the insults and affronts offered him remained outside the door, so that not the least of them presumed to enter and remain with him; in this way they were no hindrance or trouble to him. This is a proof of the great constancy of spirit by which he overcame himself, living wholly in God, superior to every slander, persecution, or calumny which he suffered from men.

CHAPTER X.

BERNARDINE IS SLANDERED TO THE EMPEROR SIGISMUND, WHO AFTERWARDS CONCEIVES A GREAT ESTEEM FOR HIM.—HIS JOURNEY WITH THE EMPEROR TO ROME.

THE attempts of Bernardine's enemies having been frustrated by his heroic patience, and the Saint remaining victorious by the solemn approval of his teaching, some say that in the same year 1432, he made a new journey through Lombardy, and that then took place the events at Como, of which we

spoke in the sixth chapter of the second book of this life. It is at least certain that in January of the year 1433, he entered Tuscany and preached either in Arezzo, Cortona, Perugia, or some other city of that country, from which he passed to Siena, where Sigismund, King of the Romans and Emperor elect, then happened to be. Bernardine's principal motive in going to Siena on this occasion is thought with great probability to have been to clear himself from a certain calumny by which his good name had been defamed in the ear of the Emperor.

Sigismund being at that time much offended with Pope Eugenius IV., from whom he was to receive the Imperial crown, some one falsely accused Bernardine to the prince of having publicly declared him guilty of heresy. This accusation, however, had a very different effect from its framer's intentions, for the monarch having learnt the holy man's innocence, and gladly embracing the opportunity of communicating with him, conceived such esteem and affection for him that he could not let a day pass without seeing him, seeming to think the day lost in which he did not either visit him, hear him preach, or assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered by him. Sigismund remained nine months in this city, where the inhabitants treated him with all the honour in their power, until the day of the coronation was fixed. The Pope had been previously pacified, and the differences between himself and Sigismund adjusted chiefly by the mediation of Charles Bartolo, who had been raised to the see of Siena after Bernardine's renunciation of that dignity, and of Bartholomew Agazzaro, a knight of great discretion and wisdom, who were both despatched to Rome by their governments on this affair. After the

accommodation there was effected, the Emperor elect, leaving Siena for Rome, took Bernardine with him, seeming to have the society of an angel in the companionship of this holy man. Sigismund was received by the Pontiff with great pomp and courtesy on the 22nd of May, 1433, and on the last day of that month, being Whit Sunday, was solemnly adorned by his Holiness with the Imperial crown. After spending some days in Rome, he departed to Germany by way of Ferrara and Mantua, hastening to extinguish as far as possible the flame of schism which had burst out in the Council of Basle. But before this journey, and immediately after leaving Rome he travelled to Aquila, followed by Bernardine, who performed the journey on a lowly ass. A man of the name of Pene-strino, a tiler, who happened to be exercising his craft at the time on the roof of a house, saw the Saint passing with the rest of the splendid retinue through the square, and jeering at him tried to sting him with a witticism, saying, "Whither is our Pope riding now?" But his taunt did not go without its punishment, for a violent gust of wind suddenly threw him from the roof to the ground, and left him stretched on the square, and bruised in all his limbs. Entering then somewhat into himself, and owning his fault in the best way he could, he contrived to crawl to the feet of S. Bernardine and begged his pardon. The servant of God was moved to compassion for the wretched man, and making the sign of the cross over him, restored him instantly to his former health, so that he rose from the ground perfectly sound and well.

Bernardine is said to have wrought another similar miracle in Rome, probably during his sojourn there on this occasion. His ardent zeal for the salvation

of souls not suffering him at any time to remain idle, he went to preach in different quarters of the city, although he was in the suite of the Emperor. Being on his road one day to preach at a certain spot, he was seen by a poor cripple who was sitting in the street through which the Saint was passing, and who told him in moving terms, that he had long wished to attend his sermons, but that his affliction, which rendered him unable to walk, had always prevented him. Then said Bernardine to him, "Believest thou that in the name of Jesus Christ I can restore thee to health?" to which the sick man answering that he firmly believed he might obtain his health from God by the Saint's prayer, the holy man laid his hand upon him and raised him, already healed, from the ground, so that the poor man set out walking, joyfully praising God Who is wonderful in His servants.

CHAPTER XI.

BERNARDINE WITHDRAWS INTO THE CONVENT OF
CAPRIOLA TO WRITE HIS SERMONS.—AT SIENA HE
REAPS A WONDERFUL HARVEST.

AFTER Bernardine had filled almost the whole of Italy for the course of many years with the sound of his apostolic voice, being still unable to penetrate to foreign nations as he would have wished to do, he thought of rendering himself useful to them at least by his writings. Having taken leave of the Emperor, probably on the borders of Tuscany, he returned to Siena. There he withdrew into the small convent of Capriola, and

applied himself to arranging the numerous discourses and sermons which he had delivered, and which he now wrote out, employing himself thus for nearly three years. He arranged some books of discourses for Lent, Advent, and extraordinary occasions; and composed different treatises, particularly on the Holy Ghost, the Immaculate Conception of the glorious Virgin Mary, and the most august Name of Jesus, which were approved with apostolic authority by holy theologians. These books no sooner appeared than they were eagerly sought after by those who studied the true method of preaching according to the taste of the times, and who thought themselves fortunate in being able to procure a copy of them. This feeling spread beyond Italy, and the Saint's writings were soon carried into Spain, France, England, Flanders, Germany, Hungary, Greece, and even to the East to those parts where friars of his Order were found, the Holy Land, the island of Cyprus, Asia, and other barbarous regions, so that the name of Bernardine was renowned everywhere as that of the prince of Christian eloquence of that day, whose words and teaching were animated by the Spirit of God, and confirmed by the glory of miracles wrought through his merits. Other eloquent and learned preachers were not wanting at this time, but they were all obliged to yield to the divine eloquence of Bernardine, and confess themselves his inferiors. Hence a very learned and acute preacher of the Order, being asked why he, who was gifted with greater learning and more polished eloquence, had not that power of correcting the vices of the people and converting them to God which shone forth in Bernardine, answered in the name of all, that he was like a piece of charcoal in

which there was little or no fire, and therefore unable to heat or rekindle the other coals to which it is applied, whilst Bernardine was inflamed by the Holy Spirit, and endued with a heat which set on fire the cold spirits that approached him.

Although the Saint was now devoted to study in the solitude of his cell, he did not omit sometimes to exercise his wonted office of preaching. The misfortunes of Italy were then at their height, and the land, embroiled in general revolution, was everywhere encircled by hostile troops. Rome was in revolt against the Pope, who was obliged to fly. The city of Florence was engaged in civil strife. Philip, Duke of Milan, asserting that he had been created Vicar by the Council of Basle against Pope Eugenius, turned his armies and his power against the Church. With the same pretensions, Nicholas Fortebraccio and Francis Sforza gained possession of the cities of the Church, one of them taking those belonging to the Patrimony of S. Peter, and the other those in the Romagna; and Nicholas Piccinino entering Tuscany, did not fail to gain over its states to his cause. The Servant of God, bewailing the sufferings of the Church under these circumstances, and fearing that the flames of discord might spread to his native place, did not fail to exhibit with admirable power in his learned and holy sermons the advantages of harmony and peace, nor did he neglect to render the union of his fellow townsmen more firm and lasting. He checked the seditious members of the state, and introduced concord and unanimity amongst many citizens who were before at variance; he removed inveterate jealousies and hatred from their hearts, replacing them by peace and good-will; and by his frequent visits to

individuals, and the persuasive exhortations which he gave in private, he made it seem as if all the citizens had one and the same mind and will. Afterwards, having occasion one day to go before the senate, he declaimed with great energy in presence of the assembled body, whose members he had already dealt with one by one. He told them that they ought all in a body to do that which he had persuaded them singly in private; and his success on this occasion served much to strengthen the government, and maintain the weal of the city for the future. But as the groundwork on which the happiness of governments and durability of states rests, is the observance of the divine law and the holy fear of God, he did not cease greatly to confirm the people of Siena in these two things, pointing out to them the way in which they might perfectly attain to them.

Whilst he was preaching one day in the square, and in the open air, it is said that his audience, wishing to disperse on account of a cloud that had suddenly overcast the sky and threatened heavy rain, he performed the same miracle that he had wrought on a like occasion at Arezzo, making the people stay, and, after praying for a time on his knees, bidding the clouds, in virtue of the Name of Jesus, to pass off, as in fact happened, the sky resuming its former serenity without a drop of rain having fallen. It is not easy to relate in what honour and reputation Bernardine was held in Siena. Besides the great trust which the citizens reposed in the merit of his prayers, they resorted to him for directions and advice in difficult undertakings, and he became in a manner the ruler of their hearts and their common refuge.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE HOLY CONVERSATION OF BERNARDINE, AND
HIS SPIRITUAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS.

HOWEVER rigorous were the habits of Bernardine in regard to himself, and severe his self-imposed mortifications, yet to outward appearance, and in his general bearing with men, he was so playful, affable, and kindly, that his society was ever sought and cherished. As the occasion and time required, he knew how to employ with great moderation, both in word and work, different objects of amusement, and whilst amusing men, how to benefit them also; accommodating himself to an ordinary course of virtuous living, and rendering virtue amiable even to those who, regarding only its outward face, looked askance upon it, and accounted it too stiff and stern.

Indeed, by following this course, besides assisting others, he effected his own purpose of keeping concealed under the cloak of a plain method of upright and religious conduct, the great treasures of sublime virtue which he bore within him. We may even say that he mixed this salt with all the virtues which concerned his familiar dealing with his neighbours. Ever bent on drawing good from everything, he made himself all to all, to gain from all something to the glory of God. If he conversed with a layman, he was a layman; if with the cook, a cook; with the gardener he became a gardener, adapting himself in his gentle charity to the genius of all men, and in his courteous humility making himself their equal. With children also he assumed a joyful aspect, encouraged them,

and gave them his hand to satisfy their pious wish to kiss it, after the manner of well-bred children. Thus Matthew Bosso, a canon of S. John Lateran's, relates that when a child he was often led with his companions by their master to hear the Saint's sermons at the time of his last preaching in Verona. This Bosso observed once that a boy, who was much beloved by the Saint for his goodness, was wearing his girdle so that it hung down behind. Bernardine gently asked him whether he walked with his face in front or behind. The boy, instructed by these words, in which wisdom and playfulness were equally blended, left off this somewhat indecorous fashion of tying his girdle.

It often happened that the Saint was questioned in familiar conversation upon different subjects relating to spiritual or theological matters, and his answers were always admirable and full of utility. A good friar of the Order, desiring to fulfil perfectly the duties of the holy state which he had chosen, asked him once the easiest method of accomplishing his wish. The Saint, bending his whole body to the ground, said nothing more than "Down, down," signifying by these signs and words that he should practise humility as the chief foundation whereon to arrive at the summit of his wishes. Another religious, wishing to learn the best method of preaching, came to ask the Saint when studied exclamations ought to be introduced into public discourses, and received the following excellent advice. "Do what you have to do to the glory of God and in perfect charity, and the Spirit of God will suggest to you the time, and supply you without effort with whatever you want." He once made a similar answer to another person, who, admiring the great repute in which his sermons were

held by every one, and the abundant harvest he gathered with them, besought him to teach him the peculiar rules which he observed in pronouncing his discourses, hoping that such a lesson might enable him to render his own preaching more useful and profitable. "In all my sermons," said Bernardine, "I have ever observed one single rule." The other astonished, and at the same time glad to think that it would be easier to observe one rule than many, again urged the Saint to acquaint him with this rule. Bernardine, without hesitation, told him that from the time when he began to exercise the apostolic ministry, he had never said a word save to God's honour and glory, and that this rule, which he had always followed with the greatest possible care, had alone given him all that he possessed of eloquence, fluency, or power ; from it alone he had received the grace of converting to God so many souls who were wandering in their sins out of the road of eternal salvation. What a change of conduct would appear in Christendom if all heralds of the divine word faithfully followed this rule !

In the same way Bernardine was once questioned by the same person, first as to the progress he had made in theology, having been told that Bernardine had studied it for thirty years, to which the Saint answered that he seemed to understand it now less than ever. Secondly, this person having been greatly tempted by the unclean spirit during the first years of his conversion, and longing to find comfort in his affliction, asked the holy man how, during the thirty years which he had passed in holy religion, he had got rid of the domestic enemy of the flesh. To which he answered, in words full of heavenly wisdom, prudently

warning him to be cautious, "I should now do worse than ever." With these words he guarded his own humility, and encouraged his weak brother by his example courageously to support his conflict with the senses, and firmly to repel the instigations of the rebellious flesh. In this manner Bernardine, whether preaching, or giving advice, or warning to men, or treating with them in familiar and cheerful conversation, knew how to turn everything to good account, and never to let his words in public or private remain without benefit to the souls of his hearers.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOD CONFIRMS THE TEACHING OF S. BERNARDINE WITH FRESH GRACES.—HE SENDS HIS BRETHREN, BY COMMISSION OF THE POPE, TO PREACH IN VARIOUS PARTS.

BERNARDINE had spent three years in arranging his sermons, when his zeal, which resembled fire in its unceasing activity, could no longer endure confinement, but urged him to journey again for two years through different countries and towns, moving the most hardened sinners to tears with his burning words, and converting them to penance; and God again followed him, if we may so speak, everywhere shedding new graces upon him as the seal of his teaching. When he was preaching at Cortona, a noble widow lady went one Sunday to hear him, accompanied by her son, a boy of ten years of age, who was afflicted with an incurable wound in the face, which

in six years had eaten away one of his cheeks and an eye, and had hitherto baffled every remedy. When the Saint had finished his discourse, the sorrowful mother, full of a lively faith, consigned her sick child to a friar to be presented to the holy preacher, who had returned to his convent of S. Mary. When Bernardine beheld the lamentable sight presented by the sufferer, he felt his heart moved to compassion, and making the sign of the cross over the boy, bade him return to his mother, telling him to place great confidence in the assistance of God. At the end of three days the boy was perfectly healed of the dreadful wound by the merits of Bernardine's prayers.

The Saint was preaching in Perugia against the grievous sin of usury, and expatiating on the severe punishment that such extortioners must expect from divine justice, when he suddenly broke off his discourse, remaining in ecstasy, as had once before happened to him in Milan on the first day of Lent, when he beheld in spirit the holy death of his cousin. He continued thus for some time, so that the people seemed inclined to go away, and his companion, who thought he had fallen asleep, was obliged to pull him violently by the habit, and thus bring him to consciousness. The Saint then called the people back, and told them that he had assisted during that interval at the burial of a certain usurer in the neighbourhood just then dead, and who, in punishment of his greedy extortions, had been carried by the devils, soul and body, into hell. The authorities of the place, anxious to ascertain the truth of the Saint's words, despatched a messenger to the place, and found that what Bernardine had said was quite true. This circumstance

spread general consternation amongst the people, to the great benefit of their souls. The history is given by a brother of S. Bernardine's Order, a contemporary of the Saint, in one of the panegyrics which he delivered in his honour after his canonization. The writer declares that he had learnt the story at Perugia from a priest deserving of credit.

Bernardine fell in once with a strolling player, one of those vagrants who divert idlers by their tricks and buffoonery in the streets ; and exhorting the man to leave that kind of life, invited him to follow him. The man readily found reasons to excuse himself from the courteous and salutary offer made him, saying that his course of life was so different from the Saint's, that he could not bear the weight of fatigue which the Saint supported, and lastly, that he was not disposed to treat himself with that parsimony and rigour which the Saint exercised. The servant of God persisted in exhorting him, if he only wished to do right, that he should make trial of his life. The man consented to this proposal, and joining the Saint, for some time tried if he could adapt himself to his mode of life. But a temptation coming over him, which depicted to him the sweetness of his past liberty and extravagant sports, he grew weary of his new life, and taking leave of the holy father, told him that he wished to return to his former calling.

Bernardine was much grieved at his intention, and foreseeing what would follow, told him that it would be better for him never to have known the way of life and of virtue, than, after knowing it, to turn back and forsake it ; and that he must expect as certain, if he did not return to God, to die before the thirty-second year of his age. The man, however, returned to his

old trade and vices, and the Saint's prediction was fulfilled, for he was overtaken by a sudden death before he reached the age named by Bernardine.

The Saint is said to have procured the foundation of two convents in the Venetian province of S. Antony, in 1436. One is that of Schio, a large parish in the territory of Vicenza, dedicated to S. Francis: the other is the convent of S. Maria delle Grazie of Arcarotta, half a mile out of Verona, built by the senate of that city in virtue of a grant of Pope Eugenius IV. However that may have been, we know that Bernardine was employed in promoting religion everywhere by means of his sermons, whilst the Pope was residing at Ferrara, having gone from Bologna to that city, which he had chosen for the Council then lately announced. Pope Eugenius being anxious that his labours for the union of the Greek and Latin churches, and many other measures to the advantage of the Catholic Church, should meet with a corresponding zeal in the people of Italy for God's honour and the obedience due to His Vicar, whose authority was then disputed by the false Council of Basle, and wishing also that fervent prayers should be offered for the happy result of the coming Council, signified to Bernardine by a bull of the 20th of February, 1438, that he must send certain of his friars to preach the word of God. The Saint promptly obeyed the Pope's wishes, and appointed several of his brethren for different cities, as the Order of Observantines at that time contained many men of distinguished merit and learning, and able preachers, of whom some had quitted the more easy life of the Conventual Friars. The Saint chose for himself the city of the Council. Whilst he was preaching in Ferrara the

plague broke out, and the Pope transferred the Council to Florence. Bernardine took occasion from the presence of this scourge to reap a great harvest amongst the people of Ferrara, lighting up in their hearts such quick faith and devotion to the holy Name of Jesus, that all the inhabitants set it over the threshold of their houses; and they found this healing Name a remedy against the plague, causing it to cease at the time when, in the natural course of things, it would have grown stronger and more destructive. When Ferrara was freed from it, the Saint also passed into Tuscany.

CHAPTER XIV.

S. BERNARDINE IS APPOINTED FIRST VICAR-GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF OBSERVANTINES.—HE BEGINS TO PROMOTE THE GROWTH OF THAT INSTITUTE.—WHILST PREACHING THE GLORIES OF THE B. VIRGIN AT AQUILA, SHE BOUNTIFULLY REWARDS HIS DEVOTION.

THE foundation of the regular Observance of the minor friars was laid by a few zealous followers of the Rule of S. Francis in 1368, under the guidance of Brother Paul Vignози of Foligno. But its members had always lived under obedience to superiors of the easier discipline, and were at different times subject to oppression and vexations. By many combinations and sundry rules, it had been attempted to establish a firm union of these two branches of S. Francis's family in one uniform life. But all these efforts had

failed : the wisdom of the flesh, which is the enemy of God, had prevailed ; for as Esau looked upon Jacob with an evil eye, the spirit of the world in like sort is ever opposed to Christ. The little fold of the Observance had, however, been enlarged, and chiefly by Bernardine's labours, was now spread over all the provinces of Italy. Such indeed was its extent, that the General of the order, then William of Casale, had no little difficulty in supporting his burden ; and being engaged in more important business of the Church and of the Order, he exhibited an ever-growing incapacity for the good government of this new society : he neglected its interests, and omitted to supply its wants by fresh rules and proper remedies. Hence he began to think of relieving himself of this charge, and laying it on a Vicar-general of the Observance, to exercise his functions with full authority. The general's design was confirmed by his knowledge that this step would be agreeable to the Pope, who had learnt from S. John Capistran that the regular Observance could not be solidly established without beginning with the head, and furnishing the followers of this institute with a pattern for their imitation.

The General next fixed his eyes upon Bernardine as a person who would be acceptable to the friars, and who was generally revered ; and being at Siena, and troubled with a grievous sickness, he sent for the Saint in the month of July, 1438, and named him his Vicar and commissary over all the Order of Observantines in the provinces of Italy. This appointment was received with general approval, and the Pope confirmed it *motu proprio*. Only one individual was dissatisfied, namely, Bernardine himself, who offered every excuse to escape this great charge, but to no purpose, for

the Pope, the General, and the public voice, all imperatively demanded him, so that he was forced to bow his head in submission. He soon justified the expectations which men had formed of the happy results of his government, and even exceeded their hopes in the wonderful increase of his Order and its progress in virtue and perfection. The Saint made a visitation of the provinces, reformed some convents, founded others, promoted the exact observance of regular discipline by holy provisions, and punished the ambitious and refractory.

In the province of the Penna, afterwards called of S. Bernardine, from its happy possession of his precious body, the Saint found a turbulent foe to peace, whom he drove out of the province. The name of this ambitious man was Brother Julian Nuzj dal Fonte, the son of a noble citizen of Aquila, who had erected a convent for Observantines. Supported by Antony Camponesco, another noble personage of Aquila, by his other relatives, and by the Conventual Fathers, this man, under the influence of an extravagant ambition, had for seven years violently and despotically held the office of vicar over the devout brethren (as the Observantines were then commonly called), despite the protests of those good friars, by whom at last he was deposed for his insupportable insolence. Being unable to bear subjection with patience, after having ruled for so many years, and finding the sweet yoke of obedience too heavy for him, he excited commotions and discontent in the province. For this fault S. Bernardine expelled him from the Order, and the unhappy man threw off his habit, and abandoning himself to a reprobate life, terminated his days miserably. Such is the goal to which the frenzy of ambition leads

men; they find the way of ascent encumbered, and, as they aspire higher, they only fall headlong down, to the eternal loss of their souls.

Although Bernardine, by reason of his new office, no longer found himself so free as formerly to attend to the ministry of preaching, yet he did not omit to preach wherever he went. In this year 1438 the Saint was in the city of Aquila, the capital of the Abruzzi. Here he delivered a solemn and very devout sermon on the glories of the Blessed Virgin in the square of S. Maria di Colemaggio, where the venerable convent of S. Peter Celestine stands. It was the Feast of the Blessed Virgin's Nativity, and the nobles and great men of the city, as well as a countless crowd of Christians and of Jews, attended the Saint's preaching. The Saint made these words from the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse the subject of his discourse:—"A great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." These words he adapted, in a spiritual sense, with great fervour and discernment to the Blessed Virgin, exalting her with the highest praise, and explaining the twelve stars which form her crown as so many prerogatives of virtues, graces, and merits, with which she was adorned. Under the first star, Bernardine was showing forth the singular merit of Mary's spotless and virginal purity, when suddenly in the broad daylight, and whilst the sun was shining in full splendour, a most brilliant star was seen over the Saint's head, of such singular beauty and radiance that it seemed to eclipse the sun itself. The vast throng of his hearers, seeing this prodigy, remained in awe and astonishment, not

knowing what it might denote ; and this feeling was increased when, the meteor resting opposite Bernardine, they beheld his countenance glowing in the flood of its effulgent brightness. It then disappeared from their eyes, to the wonder and admiration of all there assembled. By this supernatural sign, Mary, the wonder that appeared in heaven, glowing with ineffable light, was pleased to reward the pious love of her servant towards her, and to show how well content her Divine Son and she herself were with this faithful minister, this rare model of true piety and mirror of all virtues, who was destined to finish his course a few years later in this very city of Aquila.

Indeed, before the Blessed Virgin gave this public testimony of her approval of Bernardine's devotion, she had shown him other proofs of it in private, treating with him in a sort of familiar intercourse. In 1422 the pious custom of reciting the Rosary of seven Paters and seventy-three Ave Marias in honour of the seventy-three years (according to the Franciscan opinion) of our Blessed Lady's mortal life, had been established in the Order of Minors. This devotion also commemorates our Lady's principal joys ; namely, her Conception of the Divine Word ; her visit to her cousin Elizabeth ; her bringing forth our Lord without pain or injury to her inviolate virginity ; the adoration of the Wise Men ; the finding her Divine Son in the Temple ; His glorious Resurrection ; and, lastly, her admirable Assumption into heaven. It was taught by the Blessed Virgin herself to a novice who, after entering the Order of S. Francis, felt a temptation to leave it, because it prevented him from continuing a pious practice he formerly had of weaving a garland of flowers, which

he set on the head of a sacred image, and for which frail ornament the Blessed Virgin now substituted a wreath of unfading flowers. Thus the good youth was induced to persevere in his Order, in which, after a holy life of some years, he died, and his soul was seen mounting to heaven, surrounded with lilies and roses, and received by the Blessed Virgin into her arms. Bernardine, after this event, daily recited this Rosary with great sentiments of piety; and it is said that once, whilst he was engaged in offering this tribute of praise to the ever glorious Virgin, she appeared to him, and, encouraging him with words of heavenly sweetness, told him that she was well pleased with this his devotion, and that for it she had obtained for him from her Divine Son the grace of preaching and working miracles; and she further assured him that, as a reward for this offering, he would at last be partaker of her joys in heaven. Indeed, some of his companions attested that he was wont to say, that every grace which he possessed or had received had come to him by means of the pious commemoration of the joys of the Holy Virgin Mary, which he had made every day in reciting his Rosary. And in this history of his life we find the complete fulfilment of the promise made by our Lady to S. Bernardine, who had, as we have seen, professed his love and devotion to her from his tenderest years.

CHAPTER XV.

BERNARDINE IS SUMMONED TO THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE.—HE SEES THE HAPPY RESULTS OF THE LABOURS OF SOME OF HIS DISCIPLES.—PREACHES TO THE GREEKS, AND IS FAVOURED BY GOD, WITH THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

BERNARDINE was at the convent of Capriola, near Siena, when he received a letter from Brother Albert, dated June 8, 1439, which summoned him by the Pope's command to Florence, to the Council, whose session had been transferred to that city from Ferrara. The question with the Greeks was now arranged, and the last steps were being taken towards their union with the Roman Church under the sway of the Roman Pontiff, the only visible head of the Catholic Church. Great spiritual consolation and solemn rejoicings had followed this event, and Pope Eugenius was desirous that Bernardine should share with the many other preachers of Italy assembled at Florence, the holy festivities then in progress, and that he should likewise assist by his powerful prayers and holy preaching in the establishment and maintenance of the happy feeling then prevalent.

Pursuant to this command the obedient servant of God repaired to the feet of his Holiness, and besides the joy which he felt in seeing the glory of God extended by the union of the Greeks, who, abjuring their former errors, readily professed the simple truth of the Roman faith, Bernardine had also the consolation of seeing the fruits of the labours of some of his disciples who had been sent by the Pope to Eastern missions. Brother Bartholomew, of

Yano, and Brother Albert, of Sarziano, both men of great learning and rare skill in the Greek language, had returned from Greece in company with the Emperor John Paleologus, Joseph Patriarch of Constantinople, and a great number of prelates of various Eastern nations, who for the most part had been persuaded by these good friars to betake themselves to the Italian Council. S. John Capistran, who had been sent two years before to reform the guardianship of the Holy Land, had induced the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch to despatch their legates; and returning not long after to Italy, S. John came himself to the Council, bringing with him ambassadors from the Armenians, who were eager to unite with the Catholic Church. The same work had been pursued by many other envoys of the Pope to those vast regions; of whom the chief were Brother Francis of Bologna, guardian of the convent of S. Paul's without the city, Brother Louis also of Bologna and Brother James of Primadizzi, who had been made Prefect-general of the Mission.

Meanwhile Bernardine did not fail to perform his part in the Council by his exemplary life and by private interviews with various personages. He felt a strong desire to preach the way of truth and salvation also to the Greeks, thus to cement still more firmly the union which had been effected; and the knowledge of his inability to perform this task by reason of his ignorance of their tongue, greatly afflicted the Saint. But considering within himself the wonderful works of God, how he had bestowed the gift of tongues on His apostles, so that they were understood by people out of every nation in their own dialect, he besought the Almighty with great fervour to grant to the Greeks

understanding of the things he was about to say to them. Then, impelled by his spirit, and full of trust in God, he ascended the pulpit and preached in such sort that he was understood by the Greeks in their language, and zealously instructed them in the things which regard the Catholic faith. All were in admiration at the prodigy, and said to one another that he understood and spoke Greek as well as if he had been born in Greece. But it was God who moved his tongue and spoke by his mouth. So that, having come down from the pulpit, Bernardine, whilst every one was praising the skill and learning which he had shown in speaking that language, gave to God all the honour and glory, finding himself as devoid of all knowledge of Greek as he had been before preaching. How this marvellous effect was wrought, and whether God opened the ears of the Greeks so that they understood as if uttered in Greek the words which Bernardine pronounced in his vernacular Tuscan, or whether He really attuned the Saint's tongue to Greek sounds, must remain an open question, into the discussion of which we shall not enter here.

CHAPTER XVI.

EXTENSION OF THE ORDER UNDER S. BERNARDINE'S RULE.—HE IS INVITED TO RETURN INTO LOMBARDY.
—ARRIVES AT MILAN, BUT IS OBLIGED TO QUIT THAT CITY AFTER A SHORT STAY.—HIS HEROIC ACT OF DISINTERESTEDNESS AND CHARITY.

SOON after preaching in the Council, Bernardine returned to Siena, according to the permission which he had received from the Pope when summoned by his

Holiness, and applied himself to promote the interests of the order in that city. Accordingly this year 1439 saw the foundation of several convents, amongst which are reckoned that of Prato, a large place in Tuscany, and that of Cremona. The brethren of the Observance were invited by the senate of Cremona, and received from John, Prior of the convent of S. Gabriel, the cession under sundry conditions, of his Priorate and monastery in the suburb of All Saints. In this house the order of S. Benedict was suppressed, and the Observantines gave it the title of S. Angelo, which they afterwards carried with them to a new convent within the city, assigned to them in 1534 on account of the wars then raging.

During the vicariate of S. Bernardine, the monastery of S. Clare of Treviso was likewise reformed. This house, called della Cella, had fallen away greatly from its pristine regular discipline, until restored by this reform, which was due to some good nuns, amongst whom the chief was Sister Felice of Verona, a most pious and virtuous nun, who was taken with her companions from the monastery of Corpus Christi and S. Paula at Mantua for this purpose. She afterwards left the convent of Treviso, and went, together with a lady of rank, the widow of Lorenzo Priuli, who was devoted to works of piety and the study of prayer, to the monastery of S. Nicholas at Murano, in the neighbourhood of Venice. Stephen Trivisano, a Venetian patrician, brother to the noble widow just named, had laboured to gain the assistance of Sister Felice for this convent, and, having obtained authority from Pope Eugenius IV., she became the mistress of virtue and religious life in this house of S. Nicholas, which had assumed the Rule of S. Clare, after the few

Benedictine nuns who had hitherto occupied it, without much regularity of conduct, had been transferred into other convents. With its new discipline, the house changed its designation of S. Nicholas for that of S. Clara of Murano.

During the progress of these transactions, letters had been sent to Bernardine from various parts of Italy, in which he was requested to undertake another journey through Lombardy, to confirm its people by his preaching in the Catholic faith, and in union and peace with the Church, then much harassed by the schism of the Council of Basle, which had created an anti pope, who called himself Felix V. The Saint determined at last to make this journey, and towards the end of the year 1439, or about the beginning of 1440, visited Lombardy, and in particular those places where the people had suffered for many years the disasters of a long war. He was received every where with distinguished honour and genuine affection, especially in the city of Milan, although the face of things had so changed since the period of his last visit to that city, that the Saint said he seemed to see a new world. Bernardine applied himself as usual to preaching, but was not able to continue his ministry long. He had discovered a serious abuse which had crept in, partly through the ignorance of the people, and partly through the arrogant pretensions of the Duke, of the following nature. The letters, or, as they may be styled, proclamations or public decrees of that sovereign, were received by the people as though they had been holy relics, and thus met with a species of sacred veneration. Full of zeal for the glory of God, Bernardine, in one of his sermons, severely reprobated this custom, expressing with

apostolic freedom, his astonishment and strong disapproval of the pride and arrogance of the prince, and exhorting the people to despise the world, and to make no account of its vain glory. The Duke, on hearing of this sermon, was exceedingly indignant, and signified to the saintly preacher that if he should presume again to preach in the same way, he would put him to death with every kind of torture. Bernardine was much rejoiced on receiving this message, and, after having mentioned to the people in his next discourse the threats held out to him by the Duke, he besought them to take no thought for his safety, declaring himself ready to die for the truth, and then with undaunted courage again publicly condemned the practice and its author. The Duke was overcome by the Saint's constancy, and terrified by the threats which God signified to him; he laid aside his anger without venturing to offer Bernardine any injury, but ordered him to quit the city, which the Saint forthwith did.

Whilst the question was in agitation, there stood at the Duke's elbow a courtier of evil counsel, a disgraceful sycophant, who longed to catch Bernardine in a snare, and so rob him of his strength. He accordingly resolved to try whether the zealous preacher would really carry out in action what he had taught in word, and advised the Duke to send Bernardine a chalice full of gold, telling the prince at the same time that if the Saint accepted it he might let the people know that their preacher did not practise what he taught, since he instructed others to embrace poverty and despise riches, whilst he himself did just the contrary in taking this large present of money. The Duke gladly followed his advice, and caused Bernar-

dine to be presented with a chalice, in which there were fifty-two gold ducats, telling him that he sent them for his love towards the Saint, that he might employ them in his need and according to his pleasure. But Bernardine, who counted as nothing all the riches of the world, deeming himself blessed and most wealthy in his single jewel of evangelical poverty, would never become acquainted with worldly pelf, never keeping, or handling, or even looking upon the legacies sometimes bequeathed to him for building convents of his order. He firmly refused the Duke's offer, bidding the messenger tell him that he had no need of it. The Duke was not yet satisfied with this answer ; he sent back the same sum, with a message that if the Saint did not desire it for his individual use, he might at least receive it for some of his brethren, and for the erection of convents. But the Saint's constancy was not to be so seduced, and he sent back the money as before. Being at last informed that the Duke expressly commanded that the money should not be returned any more, as he left the disposal of it to the Saint's simple free-will, Bernardine bid the bearer follow, and took him to the public gaol, which contained many prisoners for debt. Having asked them one by one for what sum each was detained, he set free the whole of the unfortunate men there confined except two, whose debts could not be discharged by the money sent him by the Duke. These wretched men, lamenting and complaining of their sad fate, entreated the servant of God not to forsake them, and he, feeling his bowels of compassion moved at their condition, promised to do all in his power to procure their liberation, assuring them that in any case, if he could not move anyone's heart to

this work of mercy, he would take their place in prison. This having come to the knowledge of some citizens of Milan, they were moved by so great an example of heroic charity, and gave the sum needful to liberate the two prisoners. The knowledge of this occurrence soon reached the Duke's ears, and induced him to dismiss all evil suspicion, ill-will, or anger, which he had harboured against the servant of God, and he now praised him as one who truly despised the world. His esteem for the Saint increased, until two years later he recalled the Saint, as we shall presently see, to preach at Milan.

CHAPTER XVII.

S. BERNARDINE AIDS THE PEOPLE OF FLORENCE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A WONDERFUL VICTORY.—FROM THAT CITY HE GOES TO ASSISI; THEN TO THE CONVENT DEL MONTE BEYOND PERUGIA, WHERE HE INSTITUTES STUDIES OF MORAL THEOLOGY.—TAKES S. JOHN CAPISTRAN AS HIS COADJUTOR.

BERNARDINE left Lombardy in 1440, and by God's Providence returned into Tuscany, which was then suffering under the attacks of Nicholas Piccinino, commanding the army of Philip Mary, Duke of Milan. Great was the dismay of the Florentines at the presence of this enemy, who was devastating the Casentino district, and even threatening to attack Florence, whilst the citizens, without soldiers or sufficient means of resistance, were terror-stricken at the sense of their weakness. Bernardine arriving at Florence at this juncture, began to animate them without ceas-

ing by his holy preaching, and to exhort them confidently to pray for succour to the God of hosts. A happy event crowned his words, for the Florentines, through the public prayers which they offered, and the arrival of auxiliary troops from the Pope, and of a band of mercenaries whom they made shift to engage, at last felt themselves in a condition to give battle to the enemy, who was encamped near Anghiari, a town lying at the foot of the Apennines, in the territory of Arezzo. Here the forces of Florence were suddenly assailed whilst carelessly reposing and relying on the sacredness of the day, which was the feast of SS. Peter and Paul ; but nevertheless they fought so bravely for four hours, that they remained victorious, with the loss of only ten of their army slain, others say only one, and he not cut down in action, but killed under the horses' feet, having fallen in the thick of the fray, and of 200 men wounded ; whilst of the enemy 60 perished, 400 were wounded, and 1800 made prisoners. This victory, as many writers say, was obtained more by the divine power than the courage or skill of men, according to which, indeed, the crafty Piccinino had so ordered his battle as to ensure victory, and we cannot doubt that the exhortations, merits, and prayers of Bernardine had a great share in the result.

The feast of S. Mary of the Angels at Assisi, called the Portiuncula, was approaching, and Bernardine had convoked many venerable fathers of the Order to meet in Assisi for it. In the month of July he repaired to that city, and, with the consent of his brethren, passed several decrees for the progress and well-being of the Order. The consciences of the simple brethren were disturbed by a variety of

doubts regarding the sense they should affix to the rule which they had professed, some imagining that they were bound to more than it imposed on them, particularly in respect to poverty and eating meat. Some, who were accustomed to the rigour of Brother Thomas, of Florence, held that it was unlawful for a friar to eat meat, and on this subject Brother Nicholas, of Osimo, a very learned and venerable religious, had put out certain declarations when Vicar and Commissary of the General for some provinces of devout Friars, which decisions had been examined at the Pope's command by the Minister-General, S. Bernardine, S. John Capistran, and many others. The holy superior now collected these declarations, and sent them in a circular letter from S. Damian at Assisi, on the last day of July, 1440, to all the places belonging to the Minor Observance in Italy which had been committed to his care and government. By his approval and confirmation of this exposition, the Saint removed all the scruples which had heretofore arisen on the question, commanding his brethren to abide in peace, and not to venture to introduce any novelty, under pain of excommunication *lata sententia* and imprisonment.

In those houses, chiefly poor and inconsiderable, where such doubts and scruples prevailed, the friars at that time were rather engaged in doing penance and learning the science of the saints, applying themselves day and night to heavenly contemplation, than devoted to the study of philosophy or theology. They meditated with particular attention on the true way to become humble and to keep aloof from the world. They held that the charity which edifies might be overthrown by the knowledge which puffeth

up, and that the seeds of real virtues might be rendered barren by the breath of vanity and popular favour. Hence there were few learned men in the Order, except those who had passed from the conventual life to the Observance, and those who had formerly learnt the sciences whilst living in the world. But notwithstanding this sort of rude simplicity, the repute of their holy life was so gratifying to many princes and great lords that they chose them for their confessors. Their saintly Superior reflecting on this circumstance, and perceiving that it was attended with danger, on account of the want of knowledge requisite for the true practice of this ministry, conceived the desire of rendering them fit for their office, and thus first instituted study in the Observance by opening a school of moral theology in the convent del Monte beyond Perugia. Here Bernardine himself gave lectures for a short time, beginning with the treatise de Censuris, and procured others, amongst them Capistran, to follow his example and open schools of scholastic theology and canon law, that they might render the friars more capable of hearing the confessions of every sort of persons, and of exerting themselves in missions.

Before he effected this measure, Bernardine, weighed down by age, and still more by his labours, long privations, and sufferings, attempted to lay down the heavy charge of Superior which he had first undertaken against his will, but found the Pope unwilling to consent, as his Holiness knew well the great progress which the institute of the Observance had made under his holy and discreet government. But, as a relief to his labours, Pope Eugenius gave him authority to choose a coadjutor whom he might

appoint and remove at pleasure. The Saint feeling himself daily more exhausted, named S. John Capistran, whom he instituted Visitor and Commissary over the brethren of the Observance in the provinces of Genoa, Milan, and Bologna, and despatched letters to him from Capriola on the 14th of February, 1441, in which he called him to a part of his labours and cares. He then persevered for some time longer in suffering and working for the good of souls.

CHAPTER XVIII.

S. BERNARDINE GOES TO MEET BROTHER ALBERT ON HIS RETURN FROM HIS LEGATION TO THE EAST.—FROM CAPRIOLA HE APPOINTS AND EFFECTS SEVERAL THINGS FOR THE GREATER ADVANCE OF THE INSTITUTE.

AFTER the union established between the Greeks and the Latin Church in the Council of Florence, the indefatigable zeal of Pope Eugenius urged upon him a wish that the other nations of the East who were tainted with different errors, should be brought back to unity in the bosom of the Catholic Church; and two years before the events we have last related, that is, in 1439, his Holiness despatched Brother Albert of Sarziano with the character of Apostolic Nuncio to Egypt, Ethiopia and the Indies, to regain the people of those vast countries, mostly Jacobites, so called from the author of their false belief, the Syrian James or Jacobus. Brother Albert was likewise to procure the presence of their ambassadors at the Council; and having faithfully executed his mission, the good friar landed at Ancona, in 1441, with his two comrades,

Brother Baptist of Lepanto and Brother Bartholomew del Pelacane, a Florentine, besides Andrew, Abbot of the renowned monastery of S. Antony of Egypt, as legate from that country, and its Patriarch John. On hearing of their arrival, the Pope sent an honourable company of men and horses to bring them through Umbria and Tuscany to Florence, with orders that they should be received in all cities and towns in their progress with a festal concourse of people, and solemn ringing of bells. Prosecuting their journey in this way they arrived at Cortona, an extremely ancient city of Tuscany, between Arezzo and Perugia, where the clergy and people went out with great pomp to meet them, as far as the monastery called Delle Contesse, which stands a mile from the town. Bernardine was either on the spot previously, or had gone thither on purpose to behold these new fruits of the labours of his followers; and although an invalid, he made his appearance with the rest at the meeting, mounted on a lowly ass. The holy old man, on seeing that his disciple Albert, then enjoying the dignity of Apostolic Nuncio, was seated on a horse splendidly caparisoned, together with Andrew, the legate of the Jacobites, and that the people were crowding round him to touch at least the border of his dress, called out to him by name, and told him to cast his eyes down and fix them on his feet, to remember death, and be watchful lest such great honours should unduly elevate his mind. Brother Albert, touched by these words, and moved with respect towards his master and Superior, immediately dismounted, and running to salute the holy old man with reverence, begged him to exchange his vile beast for his own noble charger, but Bernardine refused the honour, saying that such a proceeding would

neither become one nor the other ; only he must beware lest a worldly vain-glory should find its way by stealth into his heart, and rob him of the reward of his great work. Brother Albert, however, assured him that through all the honours offered him, he was wont always to pray God to give the glory, not to us, but to His Name. It is said that a chapel was built on the spot in commemoration of this incident, with the figures of the Saint and Brother Albert painted on the walls ; but no vestiges of such a building are at present visible, the walls having crumbled in the long interval of time from the damp which falls from the little hill just above. The only remnant of it is a fragment of the image of the ever glorious Virgin with the infant Jesus in her arms, and above her head the Name of Jesus painted in letters of gold, in the ancient cipher which S. Bernardine used to exhibit to the worship of the people.

After this ceremony, the sainted Superior returned to his convent of Capriola, and devoted himself to the duties of his post, ordering many things to the advantage of the Order. At the beginning of the year he had granted letters patent, dated from Capriola on the 13th of February, to Brother Baptist of Bologna, vicar of the houses of Observance in the province of Milan, which empowered him to receive the foundation of a convent in the town of Treviglio, as the people of that place, who bore a great devotion towards Bernardine and his followers, had by a public deed of gift conferred on them land for the erection of a house. Whilst Brother Baptist, aided by their liberality, was waiting for the completion of this convent, the friars lived in a little hospital, where tradition affirms that the seraphic father S. Francis

convene many of the wiser and more prudent brethren of the Order, and by repeated letters, he obliged S. John Capistran, then preaching at Milan, to come to Siena. His presence was of great use in the consultation held on this matter, from his influence with the Pope and Cardinals Nicholas of Santa Croce and Julian of S. Angelo, and also with Christopher, Bishop of Rimini, a person high in favour with the Pope. By the mediation of these high personages, the disorders which had prevailed were quelled, and the two Institutes agreed, on certain conditions, to keep peace. It is the usual fate of every attempt to promote God's glory to excite opposition, and to derive strength from it in the end.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHICH TREATS OF CERTAIN PRIVATE PRACTICES AND
VIRTUES OF S. BERNARDINE.

DEVOUT souls usually carry within them all the glory of their works, by a perfect practice of acts, affections, and internal virtues, known only to the eyes of God, Whom they seek to please ; whence it happens that the compiler of their lives is able to relate but the least part of what they have done. Nevertheless their outward man is adorned with certain particular actions and virtues, which form a species of golden border to the interior mantle which is unknown to us, and by these we come to know in some measure the precious dignity of that which is unseen. Many of the most astounding of S. Bernardine's works have been related, and in continuing this life we shall hear of more ; at present we shall speak merely of

the virtues of his private life, which are therefore less conspicuous.

As Bernardine, in his desire to assist all men, applied himself with great fervour to procure the salvation of his neighbour, an office which entails a multitude of occupations, he employed, in the first place, an hour daily in retirement within his cell, which he spent in holy prayer and contemplation, nor did he allow any one, king, prince, or nobleman, to disturb him during that time ; all were obliged by his companion's direction to wait until he had satisfied his devotion. Those few hours of the day and of most part of the night which he could call his own, when he was not engaged in the exercise of his apostolic ministry, were spent in study, either in reading or in composing sermons, for the Saint was a capital enemy of idleness, and was always doing something for the benefit of himself and others. When he had finished preaching, being unable to retain that great fire of charity which consumed his heart when in inaction, he would go forth to practise works of charity. He sat in the tribunal of penance to hear confessions to the unbounded advantage to souls, not forsaking this office to attend with greater freedom to the study of preaching until a few years before his death, thinking it better, as he himself said, to relinquish the profit of individuals for the good of all. He often visited the prisons, and like a mother consoling her afflicted children, comforted the unhappy persons detained in them, encouraging them to patience in the gentlest language. A master in the art of assisting the sick, he visited the hospitals, many indeed of which in different towns and parts of Italy owed their existence to his saintly exhortations in favour of poor pilgrims and the sick,

and gave wholesome advice, encouraging some to suffer patiently the ills of sickness, rousing others to sorrow for sin, and animating others to meet death with resignation.

He gave advice to all who came to him, and excelled in this, as by comparison of the present with the past he foresaw what was to be the future, and as he thus learnt to endure with a generous and tranquil spirit both prosperity and adversity, he also taught others by his sweet counsel the method of providing prudently for all things. No one who followed his advice regretted having done so, so happy was he in deciding by the bright light which he received from God, whilst, on the other hand, those who despised his counsel failed in their designs. Two young men who wished to serve God, but were yet ignorant how to do so, one day asked S. Bernardine for his advice. The Saint told them, if they would choose the safe path, to enter some approved order under obedience to some superior. One of them followed this advice and succeeded. The other forsook it and retired to a hermitage, wishing to direct himself after his own caprice. But he undertook a course of such extreme austerity that he exhausted his strength, and so weakened his brain that it began to fail. He came into the neighbouring city, and the people who knew the austerity of his past life began to follow him as a friend of God, and to revere him as a saint. The poor man began to assert that he was the Pope, and that on such a day sundry wonders should be seen. Whilst the crowd was assembling to witness these wonders, he became downright mad. He was commended to S. Bernardine, who caused him to be taken into a hospital and took care of him, watching and

directing him with heroic patience. But the poor wretch's madness proceeded so far, that one day he would have knocked down the charitable Bernardine with a piece of a door which he caught up to hurl at his head, if the Saint, by divine Providence, had not seen its shadow descending, and with a prayer to God quickly avoided the blow.

With regard to himself, although Bernardine was not of a very strong constitution, nevertheless he bore every sort of inconvenience and suffering, not only with unconquerable firmness, but with such cheerfulness that his maladies seemed as nothing, and he always continued to praise God and to trust that He would never fail to supply him with divine aid. For the space of about thirty-five years his life was spent in journeying barefoot in order to preach, over ice and through snow and rain, in the early spring, and under the burning sun of summer, often in hunger and thirst and without lodging; yet in these hardships the Saint never relaxed the severe fasts of his rule. He was ever temperate in his food, taking only so much as sufficed to support a frame worn out by fatigue.

It once happened, as Bernardine was travelling, that he lost the road, and wandering about till late at night, found himself in a hilly tract of uncultivated land, where not a vestige could be seen of either men or houses. His companion trembled with fear, and bewailed the mischance and the great dangers which imagination suggested to him. The holy father on the contrary, leading his donkey's bridle, without any trouble of mind comforted his companion, exhorting him to remain quiet, and not doubt that the God in Whose presence they walked

had guided their steps, telling him also at times to pray without so much lamentation that God would render their journey prosperous. And so it proved, for at last the barking of some dogs informed them that they were approaching a human habitation. The Saint's comrade then recovered his calmness, knocked at the door of a house to ask for shelter, and awoke all the inmates, who were sound asleep, as it was very late. The master of the house rose, and when, on asking who had arrived at that hour, he learnt that it was Bernardine, he was exceedingly pleased, and received the Saint with as much attention and honour as if an angel of God had come down to him. He made all the household rise, telling them what a holy man God had sent to their house that night, and set himself to prepare everything necessary for comforting and restoring his weary guest, taking care at the same time of the ass. His wife served them, his sons standing by entertained the servant of God, and he himself assisted with all respect and a smiling countenance, being only anxious to please Bernardine. At last, the holy man having given his body the necessary refreshment and rest, the good host attended him with no less courtesy on his departure. Bernardine was full of gratitude for this kindness; whilst supping the night before, he had often thanked the good people and shown the utmost kindness towards them, and now on leaving he gave his blessing with all the warmth of his heart to the master, his wife, children, and all his goods; and it was remarked that from that time the good man's affairs always went well.

In this way Bernardine always comforted himself with a placid and tranquil mind in the troubles, annoyances, privations, and hardships which he encoun-

tered when in health. When sick, he bore his maladies, which were neither few nor short in duration, with such composure and patience that it was quite difficult to discover whether he was ill or well. For fourteen years he was afflicted with dysentery; he suffered for a long time under the troublesome and painful disorder of gravel, and from time to time was also tormented with the gout; but he never allowed these complaints to prevent him from preaching, so great was the peace and constancy of his soul. Only in the last years of his life he found himself obliged to avail himself of the licence allowed by his rule, of covering his feet, which he had hitherto always left bare, and employing in his travels the aid, not of a horse, but of a lowly little ass. He would not, however, do so when others, and particularly his companions, were troubled with any sickness; loving his neighbour in Christ, he felt a lively share in their sufferings, and was so pious and tender of heart that it seemed as if he felt himself the pain of which they complained.

I will relate a custom of his which proves the caution and diligence with which he laboured to guard his purity. After the death of those holy women his cousin Tobia and aunt Bartolomea, from whose religious conversation Bernardine, when young, ever received fresh lessons to animate him to the love of God, and in whose society he gave such plain tokens of his attachment to the angelic virtue of purity, as told in the first Book, Bernardine never ventured to deal or speak with women except in public, lest he should defile himself by their contagion in some way or other. He had learnt from the Holy Ghost that woman is more bitter than death, and her

charms and words have such poison as to corrupt the wisest hearts ; whence he kept the treasure which he carried hidden in his frail vessel of earth with such jealous vigilance that, except in confession, he never conversed alone with any woman, much less suffered one ever to touch him from devotion or any other motive, and thus always maintained his purity unblemished.

He discovered this secret of his virginal innocence himself to his cousin Tobia, whilst she was attending him on his sick-bed during the four months' severe illness which afflicted him whilst still living in the world. During this attack, of which we spoke in the sixth chapter of the first book, Tobia was exhorting him to dispose himself for confession, when he mentioned the happy fact referred to, which was afterwards confirmed by the constant testimony of many friars who diligently investigated his life, actions, and habits. Their evidence is supported by that of the priest whom the Saint chose for his confessor, whenever he was in a house of regular discipline. Lastly, S. John Capistran gave an ample attestation of the fact in a letter which he wrote to the great lords of the city of Aquila after the Saint's death, and which was presented to Pope Eugenius IV. In this document he declares that the holy man of God Bernardine had preserved his person throughout life unstained by any corruption, and had offered to God at his death the lily of his virginity free from spot. We may suppose that Capistran, whilst Superior, had exacted this information from the mouth of Bernardine under precept of obedience, since his humility would oblige him to keep this angelic prerogative concealed ; others say that Capistran knew of

it from Bernardine's generally confessing to him, and that S. John gave authentic testimony to the fact in presence of the Pope. Bernardine thus obtained two crowns for his double merits—one the reward of the labours of apostolic men, and the other that which God keeps for those virgins who have ever restrained the rebellion of the flesh within the hard bands of continence.

CHAPTER XX.

BERNARDINE IS CALLED TO BRESCIA, WHERE HE PREACHES; HE THEN RECEIVES THE FOUNDATION OF THE CONVENT OF GARDONE.—WITHDRAWING INTO TUSCANY, HE RENOUNCES THE VICAR-GENERALSHIP.

IF we trusted for information to the writings of the historians of S. Bernardine's life, we should not be aware that in the year 1442 he was in Brescia and its district, a fact which we derive from a public deed of gift. Peace had been concluded between the Republic of Venice and the Duke of Milan at the close of the previous year, in virtue of which, amongst other things, the city of Brescia, with its surrounding towns, had been relieved from a cruel and perilous war of several years' duration. A great admirer and friend of S. Bernardine, Francis Barbaro, a brave and renowned senator, then governed Brescia for the Venetian Republic, and he was probably the writer of those letters which were sent to him, as we said, from Lombardy. The Saint, having been prevented during the past years from visiting this dis-

trict, now resolved to repair thither, being urged by his zeal to assist souls, and knowing that the long siege which Brescia had sustained, together with famine and plague, which had afflicted the city, must have produced the usual results of such scourges, in every sort of vice and corruption, dearth of piety, and ignorance of the duties of a Christian life. It is highly probable that the holy man preached during Lent for the second time in Brescia, with that abundant harvest which he was wont to gather from his sermons, and that he then announced the gospel to the surrounding district.

In the month of April we know that he was at Gardone, a large village of the Tromplina Valley, where he obtained, by respectful entreaties, a site for the erection of a convent. This appears from a public document subscribed by the Saint on the 20th of April, 1442, in which he received from James and Avogadro, son of Franceschino, of the noble family of the Avogadri, the donation of some tracts of land lying in a parish commonly called Valcavvera, thereon to build a convent of his order, with its church, which was to be dedicated in honour of the Madonna degli Angeli (as was afterwards done), with an obligation to pray to God for the donors, and to present to them and their successors, on an appointed day of each year, three flowers or three fir-cones in mark of recognition.

Pursuing his mission through this country, there is a tradition that he arrived at Iseo, a village situate on the banks of the lake of the same name, and that he there left behind him some record of himself; as likewise in Aguzzano, a place two miles distant from the fortress of Orzi Nuovi, where he founded a convent

in a very retired spot, surrounded by a thick wood of oaks, as he was always fond of woody situations, which were more fit for the holy leisure of contemplation. Further it is said that he preached in the above-named fortress, from the marble pulpit which is seen at this day near the church of his order, it having been transported to this spot from the square where it formerly stood. Bernardine next retired into Tuscany, with an extreme desire of being relieved from the burden of superiorship, which he had now borne for five years against his inclination and with great difficulty.

A favourable opportunity soon presented itself. Pope Eugenius IV., having learnt that the Conventual fathers of the province of S. Antony had chosen Brother Albert of Sarziano, an Observantine, as their minister in place of Brother Dalismano of Padua, who had died whilst in office, and that the election had been made with only one dissentient voice, thought this a favourable step towards the execution of his ideas regarding the removal of dissensions between the two bodies; and therefore, further imposed on Brother Albert, on the 10th of July, the office of Vicar-General of the whole Order, in the room of Brother William of Casale, the General, who died early in the year, until the approaching general chapter, which by his command was to be held at Padua in the following year. Bernardine no sooner heard of Brother Albert's election than he flew to the feet of the Pope, who was still in Florence, and, with humble and fervent prayers, obtained permission to lay down his charge of Vicar-General over the order of Observantines, alleging his age, a desire to be more free to attend to preaching, and

his approaching end, as legitimate reasons for his resignation. The Pope was much grieved at it, well knowing the great advantages that had accrued to the order, both in spiritual perfection and the increase of convents and friars, under the sage government of Bernardine; nevertheless, wishing to please the holy man, he granted a request which he had formerly rejected. But his Holiness would not, for the moment, confer this office on any other person; he was frequently engaged in treating with the new Superior and S. Bernardine concerning the affairs of the order and the differences then existing, and exposed to the saintly old man his views regarding the union which he desired of the Conventuals and Observantines in one body.

Bernardine, happy to find himself at last free from every encumbrance, and at liberty to follow his vocation in the ministry of the divine word, withdrew to his convent of Capriola to attend in peace to holy contemplation. But his stay here was short, for he was obliged to go to Milan at the Duke's invitation, as we shall see in the following chapter. In the meantime the Vicar-General of the Order, Brother Albert, being anxious to express in some way his sense of the merits and labours of the Saint, and also that he should be considered by every one, not only from respect, but also from duty, as a living model of holiness, and father and master of discipline and the religious life, despatched letters patent from Florence on the 24th of August, whereby he appointed him his Commissary with full powers in the house of Capriola. But Bernardine, whose profound humility induced him to obey even the wishes of his com-

panions, took little heed of this distinction, but rather chose to be subordinate than superior to any one.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SAINT PREACHES AT MILAN FOR THE LAST TIME. — THEN GIVES THE LENTEN COURSE AT PADUA. — THE HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF S. BERNARDINE'S MONASTERY IN THAT CITY.

TWO years had elapsed since Bernardine's hasty departure from Milan, during which Duke Philip's good opinion of his sanctity had been continually receiving confirmation, so that, wishing to profess his veneration and love for the Saint, he now recalled him to his city. The Saint readily undertook this journey, although now extremely distressing to his aged frame, and arrived at Milan from Siena about the middle of October or beginning of November. He was received with great tenderness and respect at Milan, and preached in that great city for the last time with such delight and advantage to his hearers that he was listened to with an eagerness never felt for the sermons of other preachers. The Duke himself was so gratified that he wrote to Brother Albert towards the end of the year 1443, asking him to leave Bernardine in Milan for the ensuing Lent. The same request had been preferred by Borso, Marquis of Ferrara, for his own city. But the Vicar-General, who had proposed him in a sermon to the city of Padua, and who was anxious to have him by himself to consult and dispose things for the approaching general chapter, courteously demanded Bernardine's presence

of both these princes, showing them sufficiently that they must not persist in their request, and that he could not gratify them in this particular.

Bernardine, on receiving intimation of his Superior's wish, which had been previously communicated by his companion, who had received orders to go from Padua to Milan, and conduct the Saint back for the approaching Lent, went to Pavia, and there, as his age continually weighed more upon him, embarked on the Po and sailed down that river to Ferrara, from whence he removed to Padua in time to begin his course of sermons for Lent, which began in that year on the 6th of March. Such were the fruits that he gathered during this season at Padua, that he said himself, in his last sermon, that he could not recollect having ever been so successful anywhere else. Christopher Moro and Matthew Vitturi, who were then the magistrates of the city, one holding the office of governor and the other that of mayor, were assiduous in their attendance at his discourses, and they were supported by the deputies of Padua, the principal professors and lecturers, with their students, and the citizens in countless crowds, never wearied with his preaching, but daily flocking in greater numbers with renewed eagerness, so great was the pleasure and spiritual benefit which they derived from hearing the divine word from the saintly lips of Bernardine. The people, and particularly the highest and most distinguished for rank or learning amongst them, following the example of the public magistrates, exhibited the most profound veneration and love for the Saint's person. With the magistrates Bernardine had formed a holy friendship, in particular with Moro, to whom

one day, in his accustomed playful manner, he foretold that he would succeed Francis Foscari, then Doge, in that office after Foscari's death, as afterwards happened.

Both before and after Lent, and throughout that holy season, Bernardine always preached in the open air, and, except once, his sermons were never interrupted by rain, although several times at the hour of tierce, at which he preached, the clouds threatened a heavy storm; but the Saint, with a sign of the cross, kept the rain suspended in the heavens until after his discourse, when the clouds would gather more densely, and the rain, as though now free to take its course, fell in torrents, deluging the ground with great violence. On one day only did it rain, and then the holy preacher accounted for the exception, for as he was preaching against the foul vice of lust, he said that the weather sought to adapt itself to his subject-matter, and to rain on that filth. Bernardine at this period extirpated many vices and evil habits from the hearts of the people of Padua, and introduced many regulations and goodly usages amongst them. He had remarked that the Jews of this city enjoyed too much familiarity with Christians, by whom they were so far indulged as not to wear any distinguishing badge. Astonished at this abuse, which also prevailed in Verona and Vicenza, the Saint explained in one of his sermons the prohibitions of the canons regarding intercourse with Jews, and stated that Christians should not put confidence in them, and he also persuaded the citizens by solid reasons to order the Jews to adopt a badge which marked them out from the rest of the population.

Discoursing afterwards on the grandeur of the Name of Jesus, and the admirable virtue which our Lord has bequeathed to us in It, and being anxious to impress on the hearts of all a devotion to this Name which could never be effaced, he exhorted those sponsors who hold tender infants in their arms at the sacred font of baptism to present them in their swaddling-bands with a medal of gold or silver stamped with that most holy Name. "Believe," he said in this sermon, "believe, O pious and faithful servant, that all power for a virtuous life lies enclosed in the potent Name of Jesus, so that, as thou adorest Jesus in the flesh (that is, the Word made Man), so thou shouldst worship the Name of Jesus, not forsooth the carving or painting, but the inward meaning ; not the sign, but the thing signified, because the Name of Jesus represents to thee thy Saviour and Redeemer, the Son of God. Therefore, when thou receivest from the baptismal font any infant, instead of the idle presents usually made, thou shouldst place within their bands the present of a gold or silver medal (according to the condition of the parties) bearing the Name of Jesus, that the infant may always wear it for devotion's sake, not for the metal of which it is composed, but for the virtue inherent to this most holy Name ; and when the child arrives at years of discretion, it may understand and ever bear in mind the devotion to the Name of Jesus, just as the pictures which represent the Blessed Virgin and other Saints serve to excite the recollection of those Saints within us." Such was Bernardine's teaching in regard to the worship of the sacred Name, nor did God fail to confirm it on the spot as He had elsewhere done by

a public attestation. There lived in the quarter of the town called All Saints a woman who was possessed by a devil, and much tormented by its agency. One day a youth, who had learned from Bernardine to have recourse with lively confidence to the invocation of the Holy Name in his own and other people's distress, was moved to pity, and laid his hand upon her head, saying, "In the Name of Jesus, unclean spirit, go forth from the body of this woman," and she was instantly released. The Saint was once relating this occurrence in a sermon in praise of this venerated Name, when the very woman was present, and rose up in the midst of the crowd, which exceeded 20,000 persons, exalting the Name of Jesus, and bearing witness that in virtue of It she had been freed from the evil spirit. About the same time Bernardine preached a sermon in praise of S. Joseph, to whom the Saint felt a great devotion, and said that amongst the many holy fathers who rose again as recorded in the Gospel, it is piously believed that S. Joseph rose in glory, and together with our Lord visited the Blessed Virgin, his Spouse, and the Saint cried out with earnestness that S. Joseph was in heaven, glorious both in soul and body, and as he said this a cross as of gold was seen shining over his head.

We may now with propriety relate the foundation of a monastery of the primitive rule of S. Clare, which was built in Padua about the time we are speaking of, and which afterward bore in its dedication the name of S. Bernardine. We may readily suppose that the Saint, then in Padua, was concerned in effecting this good work, and strengthened by his holy exhortations the spiritual formation of this new house.

In 1439, Dorothy, of the family of the Counts of Panego, a Bolognese lady residing in Padua, and married to Bartholomew of Urbino, a man of noble extraction, and such deep acquaintance with the civil law as to surpass in that faculty all his fellow-citizens, had obtained from Pope Eugenius IV. a brief, dated September 14, which empowered her to build with the property which God had given her, a monastery in Padua of the order of St. Clare, after the model of that of Corpus Christi and S. Paula, at Mantua. It was the wish of this lady to withdraw into this house to serve God throughout the whole course of her life in the religious habit and profession. The site was fixed in the street of Brey, and the work progressed, while three sisters were called in from the convent above-named at Mantua, as guides and mistresses of the new house. These were Sister Anna Valentini, Sister Isabella of Modena, and Sister Lucy of Trent; and the pious foundress, with the consent of her husband, who zealously contributed to render this convent rich and convenient, and thus made it capable of holding eighty nuns, was shortly after added to their number. Her husband, soon after the completion of this house, became a friar minor, and ended his days in the reputation of sanctity. The convent we speak of was brought to completion in 1446, when it was expected that Bernardine would be shortly enrolled in the catalogue of the saints, and the religious waited till 1450, when his canonization had taken place, that the convent might be put under his protection, and the church dedicated in his name. In this house of S. Bernardine at Padua, the first abbess was the above-mentioned Sister Anna,

who was succeeded by the foundress, Dorothy. According to the apostolic privilege she had received, this lady had at first endowed the convent with a certain annual rental ; but as soon as these few good nuns wished to have the dedication of their house made to S. Bernardine, they renounced this endowment, and obtained leave from Pope Nicholas V. to live in strict poverty, and free from all obligation to receive rents or possessions. In this state they persevered until the time of Calixtus III., who, at the request of S. John Capistran, tempered the severity of the first rule of S. Clare. In this monastery they preserve a tooth of S. Bernardine, and a piece of his clothing, as also a portion of the ashes of his body, which were brought from Aquila in 1673, on his feast-day, and carried through the city in solemn procession by the Wool-merchants' Company, who revere him as their patron, and thus serve to revive in the people of Padua their ancient devotion to S. Bernardine, who had instructed and enlightened them in the way of salvation by his holy discourses.

CHAPTER XXII.

S. BERNARDINE ASSISTS AT THE GENERAL CHAPTER HELD IN PADUA.—HIS ACTS ON THAT OCCASION. —GREAT DEVOTION EXHIBITED BY THE PEOPLE OF PADUA ON HIS DEPARTURE.—HE GOES TO PREACH FOR THE SECOND TIME AT VICENZA AND VERONA.

THE time for the celebration of the general chapter, convoked by Brother Albert, in the convent of S.

Antony at Padua, had now arrived ; and Pope Eugenius, by whose desire the brethren met, and who had already granted, some time previously, a plenary indulgence in the form of a jubilee, to all Vicars, Provincials, Ministers, and Guardians there to assemble, now in order to add further solemnity to the occasion, granted to all the faithful who should visit the Church of S. Antony of Padua, and should stretch out their hands to the charitable succouring of the friars on Whitsunday and the eight days preceding and following that feast, during which the chapter was to be held, seven years and seven quarantines' remission of the penance enjoined them. In this chapter there met two thousand friars of both families, Conventual and Observantine, and Brother Albert, by special delegation of the Pope, held the office of Moderator and President of the assembly. His Holiness had signified to the electors his desire that Brother Albert should be chosen as General, deeming that no one would be more acceptable to the two bodies than he who had been brought up for many years amongst the Conventuals, and had always lived in esteem amongst the Observantines, so that no one could be better fitted to maintain harmony in the order. But, as it happens in human affairs, particularly those in which a multitude of persons is concerned, that what ought to prove of utility is generally abused to effect mischief, so it happened here that on one side the upright members, of whom many were Conventuals, agreed to make this choice, whilst the evil-minded opposed them. They could not endure that the General should be chosen from the new religion of the Observance, as being a zealous

promoter of the stricter discipline, he might put a curb on their wonted licence. They proposed, therefore, to effect their purpose by exciting disorder, and making a clamorous tumult in chapter. Bernardine, great lover of peace as he was, at once interposed, and, by the weight of his known sanctity and by his prudence, applied a speedy remedy to the evil, assuring the malcontents that Brother Albert did not seek the dignity, and that it should not be conferred on any other brother of that family. He invited them, therefore, to proceed to the election of another friar, in which Brother Albert and himself would concur. His counsel was followed, and this tumultuous proceeding was terminated by the election of Brother Antony de' Rusconi of Como, Minister of the Province of Milan, a person distinguished for his high extraction and learning, who was thus chosen General of the whole Order, June the 9th, 1443. S. Bernardine preferred this result, for the divine wisdom which enlightened him, as well as the lessons of experience, convinced him that if Brother Albert had been elected to the vacant dignity, as the Conventuals and Observantines would have mingled together more freely, both in daily intercourse and positions of authority, there would ensue a greater facility for the more lax brethren to draw the Observantines into their faulty ways, than for those to win them over to their severity, and the new order would have been rather injured than promoted by such an arrangement.

While such was the internal history of the convent of S. Antony, Bernardine did not neglect to go forth into the city to labour for the good of souls. Besides

the sermons of the past Lent, in which he had always treated of charity, he now delivered several additional ones, in the last of which, being anxious to sum up briefly whatever he had said in all his other discourses, in order that, by thus reminding his hearers of his words, a more lasting benefit might accrue to their souls, he confined the subject-matter to the three kinds of charity — towards God, ourselves, and our neighbour; and under this division, embraced all that he had said and all that the subject admitted. When he drew near the conclusion, after having given many wholesome lessons to his beloved people of Padua, and had returned thanks to God, to the most glorious Virgin, to the seraphic S. Francis and S. Antony, as also to the magistrates and officers of the city, its admirable scholars, and honourable citizens and students, who had been always faithfully attentive to his preaching, and lastly, to all men of worth and pious women who had prayed for him, the Saint, to act the part of a good father in leaving his children, made his will in the following fashion.

In the first place, he left to them the most precious thing which he had to bequeath, namely, the most holy Name of Jesus, a Name which is above every name, that they should bear it ever stamped on their hearts and lips to attend them everywhere, and should perform no action without first sanctifying it by the invocation of this Name, either in word or writing; and that they should beware of ever swearing by this sacred title.

Secondly, he left a short prayer for every one to say each day. For Sunday, "Most loving Lord Jesus, give me grace, I beseech Thee, to enable me

to love Thee." For Monday, "Most loving Lord Jesus, I desire to love Thee, but I cannot do it without Thee." For Tuesday, "Lord Jesus, kindle in me a love for Thee." For Wednesday, "Jesus, my sweet Love, give me a sweet delight in Thee, and profound humility, that I may languish and die for love of Thee." For Thursday, "Lord Jesus, let me suffer something after the example of Thy love for me." And for Friday they were to say, kneeling before the cross, "My Lord Jesus, nailed and crucified for me, come and live in me, so that these Thy nails may be fastened in me, and that I may wish to be crucified for Thee." For Saturday, "O my most beloved Jesus, Who didst rest on the seventh day, grant that when I, a pilgrim, shall behold Thy glorious face, by the grace of Thy mercy I may rest in Thee with eternal joy. Amen." These ejaculatory prayers, with which Bernardine sought to light up the flame of divine love in the hearts of his hearers, bear the living impress of the emotions of his own heart.

Further, he bequeathed to them the charity which he had preached towards God, ourselves, and our neighbour, begging them to remember him in their prayers, and to suffer themselves to be united to him, and he to them, in bonds of sincere love in Christ Jesus, so that they might one day join each other's society in heaven. Such was the parting wish of his heart in their regard, which he now uttered in the last of his many sermons to the people of Padua, as he was about to leave their city, and foresaw that his approaching death would not suffer him to visit it again. In regard to this subject, he had already told them in a previous discourse, when speaking of the study of the sciences,

that he had withdrawn from the office of directing women in the spiritual life and of hearing confessions, and also from the government of his brethren, in order to attend to the studies requisite for procuring greater and more general benefits by the holy office of preaching ; but that he saw that even this was not enough, as to him the time would shortly come when no man could preach. From these announcements of the sainted preacher in leaving Padua, it may readily be supposed that he uttered similar predictions in taking leave of other towns.

Bernardine terminated his apostolic ministry in the manner we have related ; but then men and women, weeping with tenderness, besought him with sorrowful entreaties to defer his departure for a few days. But the man of God, who desired to fulfil elsewhere the work to which he felt himself called by the prompting of his Master, ordered his friars to have recourse in prayer to the Father of light, that He would direct their hearts towards the country to which he was to go, and where he might gather the largest harvest ; for the Saint himself was doubtful whether to visit Venice or Vicenza. After prayer, they unanimously bade him go to Vicenza.

Meanwhile a crowd of citizens, who had gathered at the gate on the road to Venice, wishing to receive the Saint's blessing, were disappointed, for Bernardine went privately towards the road to Vicenza. He could, however, not pass the gate called Savonarola on the Vicenza road so secretly as not to be perceived by many persons ; and at this spot accordingly there gathered a concourse of more than five hundred men and women, amongst them many trades-

men, who left their shops to join in escorting the Saint. When he was at the church of S. Maria Nuova, a mile from the gate last-named, and now called the Chiesa Nuova, the Saint mounted upon a heap of earth and addressed a few words to the people, exhorting them not to come further, and sprinkling them all with holy water whilst he gave them his paternal blessing. Then a struggle ensued amongst them to kiss his hand, and he was so pressed by the throng as hardly to be able to walk; every one in the meantime weeping with heartfelt tenderness to see their spiritual father quitting them. Amongst others, Prosdocimo de' Conti approached, a doctor distinguished in both faculties of law, and, having touched the Saint's hand, withdrew with difficulty, being unable to refrain from weeping. The same thing happened to very many other notable doctors, students, and leading citizens there present. A few turned back at the Saint's request; many took the road before him, and went over the bridge della Brentella, whilst others continued to follow him, loth to leave his shadow. At last two brethren, his companions, seeing that the servant of God was afflicted and ill at ease with this attention, went before him and begged the bridge-keeper to raise it, and not allow any one to pass after the Saint. Bernardine thus remained with those who had crossed the bridge before him, and the rest returned in sorrow to the city. At Relesaga, a village about halfway between Padua and Vicenza, he rested with his devoted attendants. The country people of the surrounding villages, hearing of the Saint's arrival at this place, were all moved with desire to see so great a man, and

brought, some bread, others wine, and others meat to satisfy the wants of the multitude, who spread their tables across the high road. Bernardine subsequently resumed his journey, with God's blessing, and the people of Vicenza, coming out to meet him, accompanied him with great honour into their city. He remained at Vicenza fifteen days, preaching and working his accustomed wonders in healing differences and converting sinners to God. The people of Verona, who for many years had wished to hear him again, learning of his stay at Vicenza, invited him to visit their city. The servant of God agreed to their request, and arrived at Verona with Brother Albert (as some writers mention) in July, James Loredano being then mayor of the city. The Saint preached several times, and to such a numerous attendance of hearers as to exceed, on his own testimony, any previous audience. Matthew Bosso, Canon of S. John Lateran, a man remarkable for the uprightness of his conduct and for learning, knew S. Bernardine, and heard him on this occasion, although then but a stripling of fifteen years old; and he has written, in a letter in which he speaks of the qualifications of a preacher, that Bernardine seemed the exact image of one of the holy apostles, men who had received the Holy Ghost; that he was fervent, humble, pious, learned, and discreet beyond measure. Little need we wonder that one enriched with such excellent gifts was so highly venerated by the people, and wrought such abundant success.

CHAPTER XXIII.

S. BERNARDINE PREACHES A SECOND TIME AT VENICE, WHERE HE IS HELD IN GREAT VENERATION.—HE FALLS VERY SICK THERE, BUT RECOVERS.

THE devotion which many Venetian patricians bore to S. Bernardine took the holy preacher to that city for the second time in 1443. He was received there and respected by every one as a Saint. Each day men of learning and wisdom, and a countless crowd of people, thronged to hear him preach; and, in their admiration of his mildness, affability, gentleness, and above all, of his wisdom, learning, and playful sweetness of speech, remained so captivated by him that they appeared incapable, especially the learned and powerful amongst his hearers, of tearing themselves away from him; whether he preached in public or conversed in private they hung upon his lips. One amongst many others was Bernard Giustiniano, a learned man and great senator, and nephew to the sainted Proto-patriarch of Venice, Laurence Giustiniano, who was then only Bishop of Castello. This Bernard had moreover the good fortune to be able at pleasure to indulge in contemplating the holy and delightful presence of Bernardine, when the Saint visited his house to see his father Leonard, a senator of great dignity, with whom the holy preacher had formed a friendship the first time that he visited Venice. It is likely that Bernardine was also intimate with the holy bishop Laurence, as the family of the Giustiniani esteemed him so highly that Leonard, the

Bishop's brother, often visited him, and consulted him on important business.

Besides these noble personages and Francis Barbaro, often before mentioned, we may name others with whom Bernardine had contracted friendship, and by whom he was held in great veneration; for instance, Matthew Vitturi, Gaspar Cornaro, Christopher Donato, James Loredano, and Francis Valiero. The latter dying in the year 1457, on the 5th of June, desired to be interred at the foot of S. Bernardine's altar in the little church, then S. Francis della Vigna. We must add Mark Zane, the Doge Francis Foscari, and Nicholas Marcello, who, on his elevation to the Dogeship in 1472, struck a medal on which was engraved the Name of Jesus, which Bernardine had preached, in the form wherein the Saint had represented It. But no one was more favoured by Bernardine than Christopher Moro, and no one returned his confidence with greater proofs of benevolent veneration than this person, of whom we shall speak further. The same reputation of sanctity which procured for Bernardine so eager a hearing, and such respect from every class of men in Venice, likewise induced several convents of nuns to invite him to preach to them. Indeed, a constant tradition of the nuns of the ancient and famous convent of S. Zachary affirms that S. Bernardine preached in their church, and on that very pulpit, afterwards filled by the most renowned preachers of Italy, which, in memory of Bernardine, was kept for the use of the sacred ministry of preaching down to the year 1743, although, from its antiquity of three hundred years, it was tottering and infirm.

Whilst Bernardine was thus engaged with general

applause in gathering copious fruit from every rank of life in Venice, God suffered him to fall into a very serious illness. Peter Tomasi, a Venetian doctor, had the happiness of curing him, as God was willing that he should labour yet a little longer in His vineyard, and had ordained that another city should enjoy the privilege of possessing his holy body. On this occasion the Saint, either for the spiritual edification of his brethren, or because, as had happened before, he was questioned by some one who was anxious to draw to his sermons such a concourse of people as attended those of the Saint, said that he had never ascended the pulpit with any other end than the glory of God and the salvation of souls. We are unable to gather from any written source in which of the two convents of his Observance the Saint was then residing, but we may suppose that he sojourned this time in the new house of S. Job, a poor, small, and retired convent, where he recovered his health after his illness. This opinion is founded on a local tradition, which gives to a small, but ancient cloister of that house the name of S. Bernardine's Cloister, and by the generous favour shown to the convent of S. Job by the Doge Christopher Moro, in proof of his grateful recollection and veneration of the Saint.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BERNARDINE, 'PREACHING IN FERRARA, PREDICTS SEVERAL FUTURE CALAMITIES.—SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS OTHER PREDICTIONS.

BERNARDINE turned from Venice towards Tuscany, and on reaching Ferrara, preached there for several

days. In one of these sermons his mind was illuminated by the light of prophecy, and he foretold many calamities which would befall unhappy Italy in the beginning of the next century—bloody wars, cruel destruction of life, princes at variance, and Rome a desert. His words were: “All these things will come upon the people of Italy for their sins, in 1510 and 1511. The sun will suffer an extraordinary eclipse, and give portentous signs; for an hour the moon will not give her light, and the whole course of the year will be changed; the stars will give signs, and during this period, that is to say, for ten years, all these things will continue in Italy. Princes will be at variance, deceit and treachery will reign among them. Woe to thee, Italy, in these years, for armed nations will come upon thee with valour, and their tongue will be unknown to thee! Then will thy tears flood the earth in the deluge of blood which will be shed; thou shalt call out, and the Lord will not hear thee. Woe to thee, Italy, in that day! If thou fleest to walled cities, I will gird thee about with enemies, and strike thee with famine. If thou run to the strong castle, or the mountain height, I will cast poison and death into the air; and these things shall not cease, O Italy, until thou soften thy heart. Woe to the city which shall be humbled, and shall lose unnumbered sons! Woe to the city that shall be scourged with pestilence and brought down to the ground! Woe to the city of Tuscany, it shall witness untold bloodshed! Rome shall become as a widow, and horrors shall reign throughout Italy. Woe, woe, woe, O Italy, in that day! But in that day pray to God, as the men of Ninive, with fasting and weeping, and smiting of the breast; rend

your hearts, and you will find mercy with God, who reigneth for ever and ever." Such a terrible announcement must have struck great terror into the minds of his hearers, and the histories of the time manifestly prove that all these calamities too truly fell upon unhappy Italy, and that Bernardine's prophecy was perfectly fulfilled in every particular.

Besides this and various other predictions which have already been mentioned in the course of this life, Bernardine delivered several others at sundry times and places ; for God was pleased to show that he had granted to His servant the gift of prophecy, which formerly He had given to His apostles, to the early faithful, and many other followers of their lives, to which Bernardine also sought earnestly to conform.

The Saint, preaching at Brescia in 1421, foretold the erection of heights, fortresses, and walls, which Philip, Duke of Milan, then master of Brescia, would impose on the city, saying, " Bring stones, gravel, and lime." In two years from that time, in 1423, his meaning was divulged, for by the Duke's order the stronghold of the Garzetta was raised, and close by the walls, bridges, and forts of the citadel, as far as the church of S. Luke ; a wall was drawn thence under the great fort which stands on the summit of the Chineo hill, and similar works thrown up at the Torlonga-gate, and at those of S. Nazzaro and S. Alexander.

Again, the Saint, when preaching at Venice for the first time in 1422, predicted that the time would come when ships would pass across the hills, and horses over the sea. The first part of this prophecy was verified in 1438, when, the city of Brescia being reduced to extremities by the obstinate siege laid to

it by Nicholas Piccinino in the name of the Duke of Milan, a strong naval force of two galleys, four brigantines, and twenty cutters, which had been taken from the arsenal of Venice, and sent up the Adige to Verona, was stationed on the Lago di Garda ; for from Verona these vessels were transported over the mountains to the lake by the skill of a Greek engineer of Candia, named Sorbolo. The second part of Bernardine's predictions received its confirmation in the first years of the Dogeship of Christopher Moro, when the Turks had made themselves masters of some territory of the Republic in the Morea, and driven out the lawful princes of that country, for the Venetians despatched a large army of land forces thither, supported by a body of horse.

S. Bernardine, moreover, beheld in vision another renowned spirit like himself, who would enter the order twelve years after his death, and bear his own name. This was the Blessed Bernardine of Feltre, of whom, preaching once in Perugia, and at another time in Florence, our Saint prophetically declared, "Another Bernardine will come after me in this habit, and at a time of greater need. Hearken to him, and do what he will tell you, because there are some who will not hear him. He will do great things; trust to his words, and do what he teaches you."

S. Bernardine preached his last Lent in Massa of Siena, and we may here mention that one day when he was at dinner with a townsman of that place, the host received word that his wife had borne him a boy. Whilst congratulating him on this event, Bernardine told him to be careful about this child on Thursdays and Sundays. The citizen not reflecting

on these words, the next Thursday the servants found that the infant had been smothered in his cradle. The Saint uttered many other predictions, particularly in regard to his approaching death, of which we shall soon speak in its proper place.

CHAPTER XXV.

S. BERNARDINE ARRIVES AT SIENA.—BROTHER VINCENT, HIS FAITHFUL COMPANION, DIES, AND THE SAINT PIOUSLY DEPLORES HIS LOSS.—HE DELIVERS HIS LAST LENTEN COURSE AT MASSA, WHERE HE CURES A LEPER.

BERNARDINE preached at Bologna, and probably at Florence, on his road to Siena, where he tarried for some time after his arrival, engaged in putting the last stroke to some little treatises which are full of learning and unction. Soon after his arrival, his faithful friend and companion, Brother Vincent of Siena, falling grievously sick, made a holy end in the convent of Capriola. He had attended Bernardine for more than two-and-twenty years, sharing in his sufferings and labours in the ministry of preaching, and had always borne the charge of providing the means of sustenance, being careful, provident, and full of love as a doting mother of her son. Bernardine's spirit rested on Brother Vincent, and the Saint reposed everything on him, making him his master, instructor, and guide, and deriving from him more than from any other person help in everything, little and great, public and private, within the cloister and

beyond it. Thus the bond of charity which knit them together was of such strength that, whilst Bernardine was a father to Vincent in religion, having admitted him to his profession, Vincent took care of him like a father, was a brother to him in religious exercises, being likewise his fellow-townsmen, and in charity was as a mother to the Saint—nay, was himself another Bernardine in harmony of spirit, intimate affection, and familiarity with all the most hidden secrets of the Saint's heart, the favours he received from heaven, and his virtues. Hence, when dying, he did not cease weeping and mourning, and when asked why he was thus sad, the brethren who assisted him being not a little astonished thereat, as those good friars were wont all to die in gladness, he replied that he did not weep from fear, or was loth to die, but from sorrow to see himself thus dying before Bernardine, because the virtues and marvellous graces which abounded in the Saint's soul would thus be buried with him : whereas, if he could only have outlived him a day, he would be released from the obligation which Bernardine had imposed on him of being silent on this point during his life, and would have disclosed to the world things regarding the Saint which would have filled every one with amazement and admiration.

The loss of this faithful friend and associate touched the gentle heart of Bernardine so sensibly that he seemed to have lost half of himself. He mourned him and followed his remains to the grave, with such abundance of tears that the bystanders were astonished to see the torrents that streamed from his eyes. He tried to allay the grief of his heart by writing a pious record of his sorrows, which he sent

in the ensuing April, together with his treatise on the Evangelical Beatitudes (in the third of which he discourses on Christian lamentation) to Peter Tomasi, the physician who had cured him a few months before at Venice. He shows the justice of his grief, and how much he merited compassion, teaching at the same time the lawfulness of bewailing, with a feeling of perfect resignation to the divine will, the death of those friends whom Christian charity held closely united to one during life. It is as it were a dirge of great beauty, rich in Scriptural sentences and sublime ideas, and it is impossible to read it without experiencing consolation and support.

The time was approaching which God had fixed for rewarding the labours of His servant during so many years to promote His glory. He therefore moved the Saint's heart in this last year of his life to visit his native place, and his fellow-townsmen and friends, and to rouse them to greater progress in the love of God. He came to Massa for the Lent of 1444, and preached during the whole of that season with great fervour and assiduity, sparing himself no exertion, that the town which had given him birth might receive the true way of living and dying after a Christian sort, from the lessons which he delivered. He entirely extinguished many jealousies and enmities amongst the citizens, and having confirmed them in holy union and mutual love, reconciled them with most sincere love to Christ. Then he gave a proof of having learnt by divine revelation that his death was at hand, by repeating several times that he must needs soon go. In order that the people of Massa might hold him in everlasting remembrance, God was pleased to work a signal miracle in that town by his merits.

The sainted preacher had left the pulpit one day, and was returning to his convent, when an unfortunate Spaniard, anxious to see him, put himself in the way, covered with so horrible a leprosy that from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no sound place in him. The people of Massa, unable to endure the sight, persuaded the poor wretch to leave the town; but next day he returned by stealth, and, dragging himself to the monastery where Bernardine lived, humbly besought him to give him something to protect his feet, which were much swollen and torn. The holy old man, moved to compassion by this unfortunate object, gave him with great alacrity and love the stockings which he was himself wearing, and which he used, under favour of his rule, in the ailments which molested him. It was not the first time that Bernardine had shown himself a true disciple of his seraphic father, who once stripped himself to clothe a poor soldier. A generous commiseration for the poor and needy had grown with him from childhood, and, after the model of S. Martin, he gladly made others sharers of his poverty. The leper put on the stockings, and at once left the town. He had only gone a short way when he seemed to feel the stockings full of little pebbles, which irritated his wounds. Being obliged to take them off, he saw that they were full of scales like a fish's, and found that he was healed from the feet as far as the knees. He put on the stockings again, and praising God, continued his journey with a gladsome heart; but soon after, perceiving that his feet were hurt by a fresh pinching as of gravel or little stones, he again took off his stockings and saw the scales as before, and that he was sound as far as the hips. Once more he

pulled them on, full of joy, thanking God, and recommending himself to the merits of Bernardine; and a third time, after proceeding a little distance, was forced to take off the stockings for the same purpose, and found himself whole and clean in every part of his body. The poor Spaniard, overwhelmed with delight, returned straightway to the town, and, acknowledging that the favour of health had come to him through the merits and prayers of the holy preacher, went to seek him, and, kneeling down before him, with a torrent of tears gave thanks to the most high God and this His servant for the cure which he had obtained for him. Bernardine desired him to attribute all to the infinite goodness of God, and, exhorting him to His holy fear, dismissed him with his blessing, and with an express charge that, whilst he himself lived, the poor man should tell no one of the circumstance. But the event was not to be so, for it is not in man's power to keep hidden what God desires to be manifest. Some good citizens of Massa who had previously known the leper, having seen him conversing with Bernardine, surmised what had happened, and questioning him with closeness, they learnt the favour which he had received, and ceased not to praise and magnify Almighty God, Who imparts such gifts to His true servants.

Meanwhile the end of Lent having arrived, S. Bernardine gave his blessing to the pious citizens of Massa after Easter Day, and having plainly told them that they would not see him again, pursued his way to Siena.

CHAPTER XXVI.

S. BERNARDINE CONCLUDES HIS SERMONS AT SIENA.
—HIS LAST JOURNEY TO THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES.

WHEN Bernardine arrived at Siena, the flame of charity which burnt in him made him feel, exhausted with age and infirm as he was, a youthful and vigorous spirit within him, and an active desire to do good to his neighbours, particularly in the kingdom of Naples, where he had not yet preached. Many persons disapproved of this intention, and begged him earnestly to remain in his own country ; it was time, they urged, to take a little rest at so advanced an age ; indeed, they spoke under the apprehension of losing his holy remains if he went into distant parts, as in fact happened. The Saint replied that he very well knew he was old and no longer capable of enduring fatigue, but that yet he felt himself urged by charity never to cease preaching the divine word whilst he could move his lips, and never to give up instructing the people, even at the cost of long and laborious journeys. He then gave his last discourse with great fervour near the great hospital of the Scala and the famous basilica of the ever glorious Virgin, and spoke of virtue, justice, and good government in the city ; and having prayed for happiness and every good for them all, he took leave of them, blessing them with tender affection, and knowing surely that he should not preach to them again. He went to visit his intimate acquaintances and friends once more, and, in taking leave of them, told them that he wished to go to the kingdom. Such was the desire of S. Paul, to be separated from the body, and be with Christ in the kingdom of His glory.

The friars of the little convent of Capriola could not console themselves for the departure of their beloved father, and, after the example of the ancients of the Church of Ephesus, embraced him, weeping and lamenting, chiefly because they felt that they should see him no more. Bernardine gently comforted them, and bid them lay aside all sadness, and not gainsay the divine Will ; rather they should pray the Father of the harvest that He who had sent him, an unworthy labourer, into the field of His Church, would vouchsafe to guide his feet that, for His Name's sake, he might tread the right way, and that He would give to his voice power and virtue to preach His wonders worthily to the people.

On the 29th of April, at midnight, taking with him four brethren of holy life and approved virtue, Bartholomew Mariani, Peter Caturmino, Dominic Guidocci, all of Siena, and priests, with Brother Felix of Milan, a lay brother, Bernardine left the city secretly, to avoid the honours prepared for him, and the escort of people who would otherwise have followed him, and arrived the same day at the convent of the Conventual fathers of the district of Ascaiano, which belongs to the province of Siena, and was then governed by Brother Peter of Travanda. At the break of the following day he set out from this house towards the island of the Lake of Thrasymene, near Perugia, which had been sanctified by the rigorous Lent observed there by S. Francis. He found S. James della Marca there, and staying three days with him, discoursed of many things relating to the advancement of the Order and the salvation of souls, and by the authority which he enjoyed, admitted the above-named Peter of Travanda to the Observance, and sent him to Brother Louis of

Siena, Vicar of the province of Tuscany. At this place, too, on Sunday the feast of the Invention of the Cross, he preached to the people, and on the following day arrived at Perugia, a city held in great esteem by the Saint.

Here the people had raised a splendid marble pulpit at great expense in front of the principal great church, which itself was of capacious dimensions, and had refused to allow any one to enter it until Bernardine, whom they expected some day, should arrive. The holy father ascended this pulpit, and smiled at seeing the great affection which those beloved citizens bore to him, who had often instructed them by his preaching. But he would not preach on this occasion, foreseeing that danger must certainly arise from the great concourse of the people. Therefore, after having said a few words of wholesome instruction, such as he deemed enough, he came down from the new pulpit, in which this was his first and last appearance, saying that for the first time He who had bestowed on him his gift, had likewise taken it away. He left at once for Assisi, being desirous of visiting the tomb of his seraphic father, of whom he was the true and most faithful heir and son. He remained some days at S. Maria degli Angeli, ever exhorting the brethren to greater progress in the spiritual life, and animating his worthy children to regularity of observance. From Assisi he went on to Foligno, and was received with veneration by its citizens, to whom he preached, and where he unwittingly left his girdle, which was ingeniously taken from him by Brother Peter, his companion, and is kept as a precious relic in Foligno.

From Foligno he travelled to Spoleto, where the

clergy and magistrates went out to meet him with devotion and rejoicing. There he stayed three days, and preached on Sunday, exciting the inhabitants, who were of a turbulent character, to harmony and peace. In this city too, he wrought many miracles, giving health to the sick by the sign of the cross, as they eagerly pressed round him. Only a few of these cases are recorded. A poor woman, named Martha, had for six years been contracted in all her joints and deprived of bodily strength, so that she suffered agonizing pain. Presenting herself before Bernardine, she was restored by his blessing to vigorous health, and was delivered from all her pains.

Another woman also, the wife of Thomas Cristofori, brought to the Saint her son, whose name was Angelo, and who lay in the arms of his nurse, wasted by hectic fever. Whilst prostrate on the ground, she besought the Saint with bitter tears to heal him. Bernardine, making the sign of the cross on the child, told the mother to take it back to her house, and, when it returned thither, the fine colour came back into its cheeks by degrees, and the child was perfectly restored to health.

Bernardine left Spoleto on the 11th of May, but was only able to prosecute his journey with great difficulty, on account of the thronging of the people after him, and the weakness which he suffered. On the next day, however, he preached in the village of Pedelugo with great profit to the souls of its inhabitants. At last, leaving Umbria, he took the road through the Sabine country, and one evening arrived at the city of Rieti, where he was met by the governor and magistrates, who came out to meet him with lighted torches in their hands. They brought him, amidst a great

crowd, to the convent of S. Francis, where, having ordered a sumptuous supper to refresh his wearied body, they assisted him to partake of it. Amongst the many dishes, he tasted, rather than ate, of some, and then, having dipped some bread in a glass of water which he called for, eat it with great satisfaction, and kept his companions so much entertained by his conversation, that they afterwards protested they had never taken supper with such pleasure. The day after, the chief men of the city earnestly besought him to stay for some days, and to refresh the people with the Divine Word, for which they hungered. As the governor was his particular friend, the Saint complied. He preached a discourse, but had devoted little study to it ; so that, speaking in familiar language, he rather reproved in general the sins of the many, than applied himself to any particular vice, or to the precise explanation of any sentence or proposition. At the end, he said to them pleasantly that having, eighteen years ago, when taking leave of them, called them all his sons, because, by preaching the Gospel, as he had then done to them for a long time, he had begotten them in Jesus Christ ; now, after so long a course of years, he had come back to them, and saw not only the sons whom he had left behind, but also many grandchildren ; let them then remain in good-will together, as he ever received them all as his sons in the same name and affection.

When this sermon was over, John Antony Petrucci and Louisa his wife, came to meet him as he returned home to the cloister of his convent, and set before him Anna, their daughter, a little girl one year old, who had two wounds, pronounced by the doctors to be incurable, both the parents on their knees im-

ploring the Saint's help. The holy man looked on the poor child with eyes of compassion, and made the sign of the cross over her, telling the parents to have faith, because the Lord Jesus would have mercy on her, and so dismissed them. The Saint's saying was fulfilled ; for on the morning of the next day, the parents, on rising from bed, found their daughter entirely healed, and only the marks of the scars which remained in the flesh ; they returned rejoicing to the convent to render proper thanks to Bernardine, but he desired them to thank God, and forbade them both to disclose the event whilst he lived. This miracle was examined after the Saint's death by James Narniero, Doctor of Decrees, and Vicar of the Bishop of Rieti, in presence of Andrew Antony and Matthew di Paolo, notaries of the same Bishop, and likewise of many other witnesses.

Bernardine, conscious that the hour was drawing near when he was to make his passage out of this world, called to him his faithful and attached companion, Brother Bartholomew, who wrote the account of this journey, and disclosed to him many secrets, the hidden favours which he had received from God, and the punishments which were hanging over the world, and which would not be long in arriving, as the event proved. After a two days' stay at Rieti he arrived at sunset at Civita Ducale, thought to be the ancient Falacrina, and the birth-place of the Emperor Vespasian, and now a town of small dimensions situated in the Abruzzo, four miles from Rieti. He was here received with great honour, the day being Thursday before Rogation Sunday. Next day he preached, to satisfy the pressing entreaties of the populace, in the public square and in the open air, and discoursed

with great learning on the necessity of observing the divine commandments. In conclusion, he begged them all to recommend him to God, that He would vouchsafe to grant him a happy passage out of this life, and forgive him the faults which he had committed. As the swan upon the approach of death pours forth its sweetest strain, so Bernardine delivered this sermon with such fervour of spirit, and in such gentle and agreeable language, that he drew towards him the hearts of all his hearers, as it appeared that this was to be the last of the many excellent and entrancing sermons which he preached during life. And in fact it was so, for being now reduced by an increase of his disorder, he began to feel the approach of fever and a diminution of his strength. Calling together his companions, he told them that for him the ministry of preaching was ended, and that he was shortly to take leave of this wretched existence, and would leave his miserable body in the city of Aquila.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LAST SICKNESS AND HOLY DEATH OF BERNARDINE IN THE CITY OF AQUILA.

BERNARDINE, having ever in his heart the sound of the voice of the Beloved, inviting him to depart and disposing him for this parting, desired to proceed with his journey the same day that he had concluded his preaching in Civita Ducale. He reached Antrodoco, a village half way between Rieti and Aquila, and distant about fifteen miles from each of those towns. Here, on seeing a large crowd assembled in the

square, he felt a strong wish to preach to them, but his bodily weakness would not allow it. Still, although his disorder was continually growing worse, he observed the fast prescribed by his rule on that day (Friday), and refused the food which the charity of his companions had prepared in consideration of his age and infirmity. On the morning of Saturday, having had his ass got ready, he was asked if on approaching Aquila he would wish or be able to walk. He answered no, he would enter on horseback, disguising his need of such aid by playfully saying that, when he walked on foot, one degree of honour only was paid him ; but when he went with so much greater dignity on horseback, he would receive ten such degrees ; adding that the increase of respect which he expected when riding was all to be assigned to his donkey, from which might be understood how great was the dignity of that animal, on whose account greater reverence and honour were paid him. He performed the rest of his journey with great pain and difficulty, and was often obliged by the violence of his sufferings to stop and lie down on the bare earth. He asked for a little water to slake the ardour of his feverish thirst, and when his companion, Brother Bartholomew, told him that in a barren and desert country such as that where they then were, there was no hope of finding any, Bernardine bade him go a little way on and ask the person he would meet where there was a spring. The brother obeyed, and had hardly left him before he met a countryman, who pointed out a spring of pure and fresh water. The Saint moved to the spot, and whilst he sat on the side of the fountain refreshing himself, there appeared to him S. Peter Celestine,

Patron of the city of Aquila, who, giving him a gentle embrace, told him that the Most High God had committed that pious city to their joint protection, and that he rejoiced greatly at having such a companion and co-patron. Bernardine wished to reach Aquila the same day, nor did his companions object, but as the increasing malady also augmented his sufferings, he was unable to reach the city, and was obliged to stop at a hamlet some miles from Aquila, called S. Silvestro. During the night the disorder grew seriously worse, so that the Saint was hardly able to move for weakness. His companions began to lament vehemently, and consulting together, determined on taking him to Aquila on a litter, whilst they attended him with sorrow and lamentation. The excessive joy which they used to experience at seeing him enter in a sort of triumph into crowded cities, received with universal veneration and honour, was now changed into sadness and regret, seeing him before them bereft of strength and going to meet death. So it often happens ; great joy is for the most part quickly succeeded by great sorrow. At last they arrived at Aquila on Sunday with their holy father, and prudently persuaded him to suffer himself to be carried to the convent of S. Francis, belonging to the Conventual fathers, where he might receive the remedies for his disease more easily and conveniently than if he were taken to the little convent of S.^t Julian of the Observantines outside the city.

He was met on his arrival with much devotion and pity, and the cell which had been reserved for S. John Capistran, his great friend, was now assigned to him. S. John, then Vicar-General of the Observance, was at that time in the kingdom of Sicily on

important business for Pope Eugenius IV., and the very bed on which he used to sleep when in Aquila was now given to S. Bernardine. At that time it was the custom that in the large houses of the Conventuals, those brethren who came from pious places outside the city, either to treat of religious business, or to be healed of some sickness, should be received in certain cells set apart for that hospitable purpose. Such was the cell of S. Capistran in which S. Bernardine in his sickness was now laid. As soon as the heads of the city and the nobility heard of his arrival, they set out for S. Francis's to express their joy at the Saint's arrival and to visit him; but on finding him much troubled with his disorder, they procured the assistance of the most esteemed and skilful medical men. By them the malady was adjudged mortal, and no remedies which they could apply served to abate the malady with which the holy old man was afflicted.

Knowing that death was imminent, the Saint ordered Brother Bartholomew to answer and receive all comers, and on Wednesday, the eve of Ascension-day, he requested to be strengthened with the holy sacraments, which he received with such fervent preparation, such recollection of spirit, and such lowly sentiments in his own regard, that all those present were filled with holy admiration. He made a brief exhortation to his companions and sons then present, animating them to persevere constantly in the rule of life they had undertaken, and in regular observance, and kindling with divine love as he spoke in the weak tones still left him. He likewise recommended himself to God with more profound humility than ever, and with fresh fervour of

spirit, imploring His mercy in accents of prayer. At the hour of None, finding himself unable to utter a word, he signified by signs and gestures that he desired to be laid on the bare ground, in order that, after the example of his seraphic father, he might struggle with his naked enemy in nakedness. He was taken out of bed and laid on the floor of the cell, and then, extending and crossing his arms, and raising his eyes to heaven with a calm expression, as it were showing that he had gained a victory over the enemy, with a smiling countenance he breathed forth his most holy soul at the hour of Vespers on the 20th of May, at the very time that the brethren were singing in choir the Antiphon for the Magnificat of the first Vespers of the Ascension: "Pater manifestavi nomen tuum hominibus—Father, I have manifested Thy Name to men." He lived sixty-four years, all but three months and eleven days, but owing to his continual labours, he appeared so dried up and worn, that some thought him upwards of seventy. He lived in the world twenty-two years; the rest of his life was happily spent in religion, and forty years in the continual exercise of holy preaching. Thus that happy soul which, on fire with divine love, had so long desired to be loosed from the bonds of the body, and to reign eternally with Christ, at length found itself free from the entanglement of this mortal existence and the miseries of the world, to fly to the eternal blessedness of heaven.

His companions, afflicted beyond measure at seeing themselves deprived of the most sweet presence of their dear father, on the one hand bitterly deplored his death; but on the other were comforted, because his end was so saintly. They prepared everything

necessary for his burial. They washed his body after the ancient custom of the Order, and robed him in another habit, in order to send that which he wore, his cloak, books, and certain other small objects which he had in use, to the convent of Capriola without Siena, where there are many books for the most part written with his own hand, and where other things are kept which he was wont to use in illness, particularly a pair of stockings, which are shown at this day to strangers visiting that convent. Having next rolled the body in cotton, they encased it in a wooden coffin well covered on the outside with rosin and pitch, and with rough cloth, intending to set out secretly, and transport the holy body to the Saint's native Siena. But their design did not escape detection, and a rumour spread through the city that the man of God, Bernardine, was dead. Men, women, and children at once ran in troops to the convent to see, touch, and kiss the Saint's body. The magistrates of the city, on learning of the holy theft which his companions wished to effect, with all speed took the sacred treasure out of their hands, and removing it from the coffin, laid it out honourably, and then consigned it to the care of some faithful citizens, that it might be exposed the next day in the church in sight of all the people. Meanwhile they sent an invitation to the Bishop, praying him to attend with all the clergy at the obsequies of the deceased Saint.

BOOK IV.

BOOK IV.

GLORIES OF S. BERNARDINE AFTER DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCOURSE OF PEOPLE TO VENERATE THE HOLY BODY
OF BERNARDINE, WHICH BEGINS TO WORK GLORIOUS
MIRACLES.—SOLEMN INTERMENT OF THE SAINT.

ON the morning of Thursday, the feast of the Ascension, the sacred corpse of Bernardine was borne to the church, which was full of people waiting to see the body and kiss it reverently, and was placed, according to custom, before the high altar, surrounded by a number of lights. Shortly afterwards, a boy nine years of age, by name Pascal, son of Paul Mattei da Cicolo, drew near the bier, having one of his legs so bent and deformed that in walking it forced him half down to the ground. The poor boy, recommending himself with great devotion to the merits of Bernardine, was in an instant made whole and straight, and walked freely without any of the halt that had previously embarrassed him. All the city knew him, as he used to sit with the other poor at the door of the church,

offering those who went in little candles to light inside the church ; thus the miracle was rendered more notorious and remarkable, and served to increase the concourse of the people to the sacred body. Besides the publicity of this miraculous cure, it was afterwards attested by legal process, both his previous affliction and the instant cure being deposed to by Mariano de' Milatini, a distinguished doctor in both laws ; by the boy's father, Paul ; his master, Paul Vittorj, and many others. This miracle had been witnessed by a priest called Antony, son of Marino da Bagio, a citizen of Aquila, who had been troubled from his birth with a withered leg, which rendered him quite lame ; and he, exciting a lively confidence within himself, approached, and having first begged pardon of his sins with many tears, stretched himself upon the lifeless body of Bernardine. Whilst in this position he seemed to feel the contracted limb gradually extending. In fact, when he raised himself, he found himself entirely cured, and able to walk with ease, and now invited others to join in the veneration of the new Saint.

A friar of the Order of Minors called Brother Benedict, of Marsico, had the right side of his body so benumbed and paralysed as to have lost all power of sensation, and suffered from a deafness in his right ear, which made him feel as it were the sound of a river continually flowing. He first touched the afflicted part with the linen cloth which had been used to dry the Saint's body when it was washed after death ; then rousing in his heart a quicker faith at the sight of the miracles we have spoken of and the tumultuous joy of the people, threw

himself that same day in prayer at the feet of the corpse, and miraculously regained his hearing and the sense of feeling, which he had lost. This miracle was attested by Brother Peter Paul of Senesso, guardian of Brother Benedict's convent, by Brother Cola da Margine, and many other persons.

Meanwhile all the religious bodies in Aquila assembled after the hour of Vespers, and in the middle of the church sang solemnly together the office of the dead, with candles in their hands; and the Bishop with all his clergy terminated the ceremony of the day by celebrating the obsequies of the Saint. In the evening the Bishop, acting in concert with the civil magistrates, had the body borne into the sacristy, and posted soldiers in the church to keep the crowd of people back, and guard the sacred treasure during the night. Early on Friday morning it was again laid in the church, but even this was insufficient to meet the wishes of the crowds that flocked from every quarter to see and kiss the body; for when the fame of the miracles which had occurred at Aquila spread to the adjacent towns and villages, men and women, old and young, all poured into the city and filled the church, weeping, and at the same time full of joy, and crying, "Be our protector, holy Bernardine, and assist us in our need," so that the clergy were hardly able to perform the divine office or celebrate the Pontifical High Mass. The magistrates, perceiving this inconvenience, consulted together, and determined that the sacred remains should be removed from a building which was unequal to receiving so vast a multitude of persons to the principal church of S. Maximus. The procession took the following order:—

Forty-four silver and three wooden crosses, belonging to various orders, parishes, and confraternities, were borne before the procession with an immense quantity of lights. Men of all ranks followed the body in great numbers, as that distinguished city which forms the capital of the territory of ancient Samnium is extremely populous, and on this occasion it was a contest who should most honour the sacred remains. As they passed, all the bystanders invoked Bernardine's aid, proclaimed him a Saint, and gave thanks to God for having committed their city to the patronage of so great a man. The clergy sang, the people wept for joy ; all were united in peace and harmony, even those who had up to that moment been at variance, for, indeed, but a short time before, four of the common people and seven of the principal men of Aquila had been assassinated. But the incredible joy that was universally felt effaced all animosity from the memory of the townspeople, and through S. Bernardine's merits, peace, amity, and mutual good-will again flourished at Aquila, and the people praised God, Who had provided their suffering city with this faithful intercessor.

God did not disdain to exalt afresh the memory of His servant with the glory of miracles on this day, May the 22nd. Perna, the wife of Matthew Petrucci, of the parish of Forfona of Aquila, had lost all strength in her body from the waist downwards during the last five years, so that she was wholly unable to walk, and could not rise from bed without the help of two other persons. She had essayed in vain the remedies of medical men without number, but now caused herself to be taken into the church in presence of the blessed body, and stretching herself upon it with many tears

and fervent devotion, she felt strength return into her limbs, so that raising herself up without any help, and walking with ease and freedom, she praised God Who is wonderful in his Saints.

The last miracle we shall mention here was wrought upon Genutia, the wife of Maso, of Fossa Aquilana, who had been possessed by a devil for six years, and so much tormented by this spirit that she had become haggard and weakly. This woman, throwing herself with a lively faith and many supplications at the feet of the holy body, kissed them, and was instantly freed from that diabolical usurpation, so that she recovered her former cheerfulness.

CHAPTER II.

THE BODY OF S. BERNARDINE IS TAKEN BACK TO THE CHURCH OF S. FRANCIS, AND KEPT ABOVE GROUND TWENTY-SIX DAYS. — THE PEOPLE CONTINUE TO THROG TO IT, AND FRESH MIRACLES ARE PERFORMED.

THE anxiety of the people to see the holy body was satisfied by its procession through the city to the church of S. Maximus, and it was now borne again with the same ceremony to S. Francis's; but the city authorities were unwilling that it should be buried; they enclosed it in a wooden chest, and laid it in a chapel near the door of the church on the right hand on entering, which was furnished with gates, and they likewise set a guard to protect the body day and night until an iron case, fastened with twelve locks, was prepared. The Saint's body remained in this way for twenty-six days without ever emitting the

slightest offensive smell ; on the contrary, it shed a heavenly fragrance around. Day after day the sick of every sort came from the surrounding country to obtain deliverance from their disorders by approaching the body, and many were thus favoured.

During all this time rejoicing and festivity were at their height in the city and suburbs of Aquila. The bells of the city were constantly ringing as on feast-days. Lamps, torches, and candles were kept burning day and night in the church of S. Francis. Mechanics ceased from work, and husbandmen gave up labour in their fields ; every one kept as holidays those twenty-six days during which the blessed body of Bernardine remained unburied.

CHAPTER III.

A SUPERNATURAL FLOW OF BLOOD FROM THE NOSTRILS OF S. BERNARDINE'S BODY APPEASES A FIERCE OUTBREAK OF THE PEOPLE OF AQUILA.

THE sacred body of Bernardine was still lying in the wooden chest we have described, in a side-chapel of S. Francis's church, when a serious dissension arose between the people and the authorities of the city, which rapidly ripened into open insurrection. Four of the lower class of townspeople were executed by order of the magistrates, and the people, exasperated to madness by this severity, rose against their rulers, and imprisoned a great number, intending to put them to death. In fact these illustrious men, although they employed every effort to

defend themselves and throw off the blame attached to their conduct, were led to execution as if they were culprits of the deepest dye, or public assassins. They had already knelt down, and with their eyes bandaged were awaiting in fear the blow of the executioner, when a voice was heard in the air, which sounded in the ears of everybody present to their great alarm, crying three times, "Stop, do not shed innocent blood, but go at once to the church of the Friars Minor, where you will find what you desire in abundance." The insurgents, appalled by this voice, left their savage work undone, and hastily ran to the church of S. Francis, where they found blood spouting from the nostrils of the dead body of Bernardine in such profusion that it appeared like the playing of two fountains. The chest in which the holy body lay, which had been closed on every side, had been unable to resist the violence with which the blood streamed out, so that it flowed through the sides, and the cover of the chest was lifted up by it. The body was swimming in blood, which likewise soaked the cerements and cloths of silk in which it was enclosed, and this marvellous flood never abated until the people, prostrate on the ground, humbly and fervently begged pardon and mercy of God for their extravagant crime.

Many gathered up the blood with woollen or linen stuff, or sponges, or into glass phials, and it served in many cases as a remedy for various disorders. S. John Capistran carried some of it about with him for many years in a little vessel, and, ever anxious to extend the glory of his sainted master, healed many sick persons with it. He may have procured it with his own hand, as it is supposed that this wonderful event took place twenty-four days after Bernar-

dine's death, when S. John might have reached Aquila on his return from Sicily. Some of this same blood S. John left in Vicenza at the church of San Lorenzo belonging to the Conventuals, at that of S. Blaise of the Observantines, and at S. Clare, thence called S. Bernardine, and also in different convents of Austria, Hungary, and in particular of the province of Cologne. S. John Capistran, passing through Friuli, in which his master had never preached, likewise left some of this blood in the district of S. Vido, where it is preserved as a relic to this day. The historian of Friuli, Palladio degli Ulivi, from whom we borrow this fact, erroneously asserts that this blood issued from the nostrils of S. Bernardine when he was staying there on his way to Udine, whereas no indication whatever exists in that city of any visit of S. Bernardine.

CHAPTER IV.

REPUTATION OF SANCTITY WHICH THE SAINT GAINED THROUGHOUT ITALY AFTER HIS DEATH.

THE news of Bernardine's death, which spread through the whole of Italy, and produced a great sensation in Lombardy and the North of the Peninsula, was accompanied by the report of the miracles with which God daily made his tomb more and more illustrious. All declared him a Saint, and men and women of every station invoked him as already reigning in heaven, and implored his protection. Earnest search was made for any little fragments of the things which the servant of God had used, and the fortunate finder of such a relic was accounted the possessor of a

treasure. Philip, Duke of Milan, who suffered much pain from his eyes, obtained the Saint's spectacles. The city of Massa, his birth-place, was enriched with his cloak, which is kept there in veneration, and many sick are restored to health by its agency. The Saint's habit, some other little articles of wearing apparel, and the books which he had by him, and which he used for his sermons and other occasions, were removed to the Convent of Capriola, where the divine mercy imparts signal favours through the Saint's merits to those who visit it with devotion and confidence, and receive the benediction of any of these relics, by which the sick are often cured and the sorrowful comforted.

The cities and principal places, where Bernardine had preached, immediately exhibited the great esteem and veneration which they entertained for his sanctity by ordering solemn funeral rites in his honour; and the concourse and rejoicings of the magistrates and people on this occasion made these days seem rather holidays than days of mournful solemnities for the dead. The first to take this step were the people of Perugia, mindful of the holy actions wrought by the Saint for their good, and of the visit with which he had favoured them a few days before his death. They ordered a grand funeral at the public expense, to which they applied the sum of 120 ducats, and which lasted three days. A wooden stage of great height and size was raised before the door of the Cathedral, and a richly adorned coffin laid thereon. The Mass of the dead was chanted with great pomp by Andrew John de' Baglioni, Bishop of the city, in presence of all the clergy, secular and regular, and of

a great multitude of people. The funeral oration on the first day was pronounced by one of the hermits of S. Augustine, who gave a history of the Saint's life ; and on the second by Brother Paul of Assisi, a disciple of the Saint, who went about afterwards doing the same in other cities.

Similar and still greater honours were decreed by the inhabitants of Siena, who performed them for three days in the public square on account of the vast concourse of people. All the religious orders of the city honoured these rites with their attendance ; even the Carthusians, a sight rarely witnessed, forsook their solitude for the time, in order to show the gratitude which they felt towards Bernardine for the good service he had done them in obtaining the new convent at Venice.

The report of the honours shown to the Saint's memory in these cities passed to other places, which would not remain behindhand in this pious work. The example of Perugia and Siena was followed by the people of Florence, Venice, Treviso, Vicenza, Padua, Milan, and all the more populous towns and villages which had enjoyed the privilege of being instructed by the Saint ; and it would be hard to find another instance in history of any one who received immediately after death so much honour and such public proofs of belief in his sanctity from entire provinces, from the most illustrious towns, the rulers of States, and every grade of society.

CHAPTER V.

S. JAMES DELLA MARCA AND S. JOHN CAPISTRAN ARRIVE AT AQUILA.—THE LATTER IS ENCOURAGED BY A SUPERNATURAL EVENT TO LABOUR FOR THE CANONIZATION OF BERNARDINE.

S. JAMES was preaching in the city of Todi, whither the Pope had sent him at the time that S. Bernardine, then on the point of leaving the convent on the Lake of Perugia for the Abruzzi, had told him that he was going to the kingdom. The death of Bernardine was signified to S. James by divine revelation, and he then perceived that it was not the kingdom of Naples to which Bernardine had said he was going, but the kingdom of heaven. S. James felt an extreme and holy sorrow at the loss of such a Saint, and set out for Aquila without delay, taking with him two companions. On the way they met two friars, who confirmed the sad intelligence, having been sent by the Vicar of the Province and the authorities of Aquila to summon S. James.

S. John Capistran likewise repaired to Aquila. He was in Sicily in the capacity of Apostolic Nuncio, and no sooner received intelligence of the happy passage of Bernardine, and of the miracles which God was working through him, of all which he was informed immediately as Vicar-General of the Observance (if he did not rather receive it, like S. James, by divine intimation), than he turned his steps towards Aquila, thinking how to procure Bernardine's canonization. On his arrival he visited the body of his holy master, companion, and

sincere friend, with pious emotion and many tears of love, and then took up his abode for some time at Aquila, nourishing the people with the divine word, and exhorting them not to be ungrateful to the divine Majesty for the great gift bestowed on their city, now made sacred by the venerable and precious relic of the body of Bernardine, through whose merits God would work an abundance of miracles in addition to those which they had witnessed. S. James also preached for several days in the public square.

Aquila witnessed the arrival about the same time of Lazzaro Benedetti, who was sent by the Republic of Siena, to take informations and collect in an authentic form many of the miracles which the Saint had wrought during the days immediately following his death, in order to present them to Pope Eugenius IV., and by such representation to demand the first steps of the process of canonization. S. John Capistran, whose heart was bent on the same work, omitted no effort to assist the envoy, and was animated in his exertions by the following supernatural event :—Whilst he was preaching one day between nine and twelve o'clock in the morning, in the square or park opposite the Church of S. Francis, a multitude of people being present, there appeared a most brilliant star, which attracted the attention of the people, and made them fix their eyes in wonder on the apparition. S. John was engaged at the moment in praising the B. Virgin, and dwelling on the difference and variety of the stars, which he applied to the high privileges of our Lady. He was not aware of the appearance of the star just mentioned, and being unable to see it, as it shone above his head, was much surprised at the movement amongst the people, and

at last asked them what they were looking at. He was told that a star had appeared, which was plainly the same that had formerly been seen in the same town over the head of S. Bernardine, of which S. John, raising his head, was himself fully assured, and he gave thanks to God and the B. Virgin, conceiving a firm confidence that, by the divine goodness and the intercession of our B. Lady, he should obtain a happy issue to the cause of the Saint's canonization. It happened, not without the divine ordinance, that when with this hope S. John set out next morning for Rome, the same star again appeared as the guide and companion of his journey. It was seen not only by Capistran, but by many of his companions, amongst the rest by Brother Matthew of Reggio in Calabria, and Brother Philip, Brother John the German, and many more. Of the fervour to which S. John was excited by this incident, the exertions he made, and the toils which he endured to obtain, as within six years he did, the desired exaltation and glory of his saintly friend Bernardine, we shall see more presently.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CITIES OF SIENA AND AQUILA, AND ALPHONSO, KING OF NAPLES, SUE THE POPE FOR THE CANONIZATION OF BERNARDINE.—THE FIRST STEPS OF THE PROCESS ARE TAKEN.

THE ambassador of Siena collected thirty of the above-mentioned miracles, reduced them to an authentic form, and procured the testimony of the magistrates

of Aquila, and the subscription of Antony di Baccano, chancellor of that city, given the 19th of July, 1444, and stamped with the seal of the corporation. He despatched this document without delay to his Republic by Barnabas, son of John of Siena, the earliest of the Saint's biographers. Great was the joy and devotion with which these proofs of the sanctity of their fellow-citizen were received, and in order that this bright meteor, destined to confer a fresh lustre upon their city, might shed its light with greater brilliancy in the eyes of all the faithful, they immediately appointed two patricians, Leonard Benvoglianti and Bartholomew Pecio, men of great address, as ambassadors to the Holy See. The object of their mission was to report these glorious miracles to Pope Eugenius IV., and to supplicate him to commission some Cardinals to take the usual informations touching the austerity and holiness of life, and the purity of the man of God, Brother Bernardine, his sermons, instructions, and teaching, the truth of the miracles ascribed to him, and other matters necessary and serviceable to this investigation, and to report to his Holiness in consistory whatever the most exact inquiry should elicit. Also they prayed the Pope that, on ascertaining the truth of the allegations required, he would proceed to the canonization of the Saint with every due circumstance of pomp and solemnity, so that veneration might be rendered on earth by Christians to him whom God honoured in heaven by such illustrious miracles. After this supplication from the city of Siena, a similar prayer was preferred by the city of Aquila, which was accounted worthy to possess the precious treasure of Bernardine's body.

In the meantime, the fame of the miracles which

daily occurred by the merits of Bernardine spread far and wide, as they were of so clear and public a character that their truth could neither be questioned nor concealed, and coming to the ears of Alphonso, King of Arragon and the two Sicilies, induced his Majesty to add his devout and humble petition to those already presented to Pope Eugenius. He wrote a letter from Naples three months after the death of the servant of God, wherein he asked for the enrolment of Bernardine in the catalogue of Saints, not only in his own name, but in that of the people, princes, and States of Italy, its inhabitants of every age, sex, rank, and condition, whom he represented as anxious suppliants at the feet of his Holiness in this cause. To the same effect King Alphonso indited another letter, which he despatched to the sacred College of Cardinals, and in particular to five of their body, fervently begging them to interpose their good offices for the speedy accomplishment of this generally desired canonization.

The Pope, moved by the pressing requests of all these parties, committed the diligent examination of the cause, and the formation of processes to inquire into the life, death, and miracles of Bernardine, to Nicholas di Acciapaccio of Sorrento, Cardinal of the title of S. Marcello, and known as the Cardinal of Capua; William d'Eustouteville, or Touteville, a French Cardinal, of the title of S. Martino a' Monti, called the Cardinal of Anjou, and Albert degli Alberti, a Florentine, Cardinal Deacon of the title of S. Eustachio. The Pope's brief bears date the 15th of April, 1445; but the death of the last-named Cardinal following soon after, occasioned the first delay that retarded the rapid canonization of our

Saint. The Pope replaced him by Peter Barbo, a Venetian, his nephew, and Cardinal Deacon of the title of S. Maria Nuova ; and the business being resumed, the three Cardinals delegated as their commissaries two Bishops, Amico Agnifilo of Aquila, and John di Palena of Penna. These two prelates assiduously discharged their task, and presented the processes to the Cardinals and the Pope, who then convoked several secret consistories for the purpose of discussing the cause. In one of these sittings there were brought forward 101 miracles of undoubted veracity, and supported by many proofs ; so that the Pope, with the unanimous consent of the Cardinals, resolved to complete the work at an early date by declaring that Bernardine was now reigning with the blessed in heaven. He was moved to this determination, not so much by the prayers of the republics of Italy, the king of the two Sicilies, the baronies, corporations, and almost the whole people of Italy, as because he had himself thoroughly ascertained the truth of the miracles which attested the sanctity of the man of God ; and he felt the greater joy in the anticipation of this act from his former intimacy with S. Bernardine.

But God, whose judgments are impenetrable to our eyes, did not allow the event to happen thus, for Pope Eugenius was taken from the earth by a holy death on the 27th of February, 1447, being upwards of sixty-four years old. His thus leaving the work of Bernardine's canonization imperfect, fulfilled the prophecy of S. John Capistran, who once, when in his unwearied efforts for the consummation of a work to which he lent great aid, he was treating concerning it with Pope Eugenius, told him that not he,

but his successor, would terminate the cause. The death of his Holiness was, of course, a fresh obstacle and cause of delay in the matter.

CHAPTER VII.

POPE NICHOLAS V. VINDICATES BERNARDINE'S REPUTATION FROM A LIBELLOUS ACCUSATION ; AND ORDERS FRESH PROCESSES.

AFTER the death of Eugenius IV., Thomas Lucano, of Sarzana, was elected Pope on the 6th of March, and took the name of Nicholas V. S. John Capistran was then preaching the Lent in the city of Aquila, after which he came to Rome to congratulate the new Pope on an elevation which he had formerly predicted to him whilst he was Bishop of Bologna. S. John on that occasion told him that he would shortly be made a Cardinal and then Pope ; but the Bishop giving no credence to his prediction, S. John told him that he resembled S. Thomas in incredulity as in name, and, in fact, both parts of the prophecy were realized. The Saint, now throwing himself at the Holy Father's feet, said amongst other things that, as he had now arrived under the name of Nicholas at a dignity the approach of which, under the name of Thomas, he would not believe, he should remember Brother Bernardine of Siena. Nor was it long before Pope Nicholas showed how warmly he was concerned in the cause of Bernardine by protecting the Saint's reputation, which some malicious slanderer, at the beginning of his Holiness's Pontificate, impugned by

openly declaring from the pulpit that Bernardine had committed grievous sins, and died under sentence of excommunication. God thus allows some of His servants whose blessed decease is followed by glorious miracles, to be wounded by railing and slanderous tongues, to the end that, like gold tried in the crucible, their glory may appear purer and more resplendent in the eyes of men. So it happened with Bernardine in the following manner:—

It had come to the knowledge of the Saint on one of the occasions of his preaching in Milan, that one Amadeus de Landis, a teacher of arithmetic in that city, disseminated errors against faith and to the corruption of morals. At first the Saint charitably admonished him to correct himself; but seeing that the evil-minded man despised this brotherly reproof, and persisted in his sin, Bernardine, the zealous watchman of faith and of souls, denounced him to the Church according to the Gospel injunction, and publicly named him in his sermons before the people, pointing out some of his errors, in order that the faithful might be secure from this wolf in sheep's clothing. The event justified the Saint's conduct; for, the man being afterwards tried and found guilty, publicly abjured and condemned his errors in presence of Francis della Croce, Canon of Milan, and Vicar-General of the Archbishop, and of Brother John Pozzo Bonello, a Dominican, Inquisitor of heretical crime in that country. The culprit also swore under certain express penalties never more to assert, teach, or maintain any of the condemned propositions, or any other against the Catholic faith, and he then received absolution from the above-named judges. But as he was ill at ease with this result, he came before Pope Eugenius,

and craftily suppressing the truth whilst he advanced falsehood, deceived his Holiness, and procured letters from him charging Joseph Brippo, a Canon of Milan, with the revision of the cause, and empowering him to pronounce a final judgment. It must be observed that the name of Bernardine is not found either in the prayer of the subtle Amadeus or in the Papal Rescript. Nevertheless, the unwary judge, abusing the powers entrusted to him, and not observing what is prescribed in such cases, against every rule of law, adjudged that Amadeus should be considered a good Catholic, and that Bernardine was bound to retract what he had said. But the hypocrite, well aware of the emptiness of his artifices, never took any steps towards intimating this unjust sentence to Bernardine, although he lived many years afterwards, or even spoke of it, except when privately boasting of it to his friends, so that the Saint never had any knowledge of it.

After the Saint's holy death this Amadeus, instigated by the ancient enemy, whose peculiar work it is to obscure and disparage the renown of those whose actions, whilst they lived, he could not contaminate, in order that the odour of their good fame and the example of their holy behaviour may be of no avail to the faithful—this Amadeus, in order to cloud the bright reputation of Bernardine, which conferred such benefits on Christendom, procured and obtained from certain professors of other mendicant orders that the aforesaid sentence against Bernardine should be several times publicly read in presence of the people assembled to hear the word of God; and the Saint was defamed under pretence of that sentence, as these men alleged that he had fallen into mortal sin,

and lay under excommunication, and had died in this state. Amadeus, like a minister of the evil one, did not blush to spread such propositions amongst the people with his foul and polluted mouth.

Pope Eugenius heard the report of the slanders with great bitterness of heart, and openly declared in two briefs addressed, one to the Bishop of Lodi, the other to the Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Milan, that the letters which had formed the authority for the sentence against Bernardine were surreptitious and worthless: that if the Saint, of whose faith, purity of soul, fervour of charity, and holiness of teaching, he had abundant knowledge and confidence, had been named to him, he would never have accorded these letters, nor had he given them with any purpose against Bernardine. He therefore desired that Amadeus should be punished, and that all those who, on the strength of the said sentence, had had the boldness to speak ill of Bernardine in their sermons after his glory had been attested by credible narrations of countless miracles, should be compelled to retract what they had uttered. Such was the behest of Pope Eugenius, given the 7th of November, 1446.

His death took place three months later, and the enemy of S. Bernardine again sallied into the field with his followers, and proved that he had nowise abandoned his malicious designs. Nicholas V., mounting the chair of S. Peter, on full information of the true state of the case, at once opposed a barrier to the license of Amadeus by a Bull which he published April the 14th, 1447. Its object was to check the vice of slandering such illustrious men and faithful preachers of Gospel truth as Bernardine, whose life was as much distinguished by sanctity as his death was made

famous by innumerable miracles. In this Bull, therefore, a recital is first made of the whole process in which Amadeus figured, and the sentence against Bernardine is declared null and void from the beginning. The Pope declares his own knowledge that the Saint, as a most faithful preacher of the Catholic faith, and zealous minister of Christian people, had justly, rightly, and religiously, and in conformity with all precepts, human and divine, corrected and refuted the errors of the said Amadeus. All that had been said by him in preaching, or on occasion of this subject, had proceeded rightly and piously from the Saint. Finally, his Holiness declares and determines by this constitution that Bernardine, whose teaching had undoubtedly profited a countless number of the faithful to the salvation of their souls, and who had laboured exceedingly in sundry parts of the world by words, works, and preaching for the reclamation of those who were gone astray from the faith, had not fallen into any sin, mortal or venial in this matter, but had rather gained grace and merits to his soul therein. Further, as to the pretended allegation of the sentence or declaration against the Saint, the Pope declared that he had never been subject to any sentence of excommunication or other censure, pain, or penalty whatever, but that whatever he had said in his sermons, in any place where he had exercised the function of preaching, had been lawfully and rightly done. The Pope then goes on to prohibit every person, of whatever state or condition, in virtue of holy obedience, and under pain of excommunication, to have the presumption to speak or publish anything, either in preaching or any other public occasion, against the afore-

said Bernardine ; and he further enjoins, under the same penalties, those who had not scrupled heretofore to commit this offence, to retract what they had said ; in particular, he imposes perpetual silence upon Amadeus and his partisans, forbidding them to detract from the fame of Bernardine on the score of any of the things above recited, under the same penalty of excommunication. Finally, the Pope commands all clerks or religious of whatsoever dignity, state, grade, or condition, always under the same penalty, that, at the request of any of the guardians of the Observance, they should publish, read, and at Mass, or when preaching, should introduce these his letters and all their contents, circumstances, clauses, and conditions to the notice of the people.

Pope Nicholas, having thus protected the honour of S. Bernardine, proceeded to higher acts. Cardinal Nicholas, of the title of S. Marcello, one of the three named by Pope Eugenius to examine the miracles of Bernardine, had in the meantime passed to another life. Pope Nicholas now appointed in his stead John, of the family of the Counts of Tagliacozzo Orsini, or, as others say, of the Ponti, a Neapolitan, Bishop of Palestrina, and Cardinal of the title of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, known by the name of the Cardinal of Taranto. To this personage and the other two Cardinals, William d'Estouteville and Peter Bado, his Holiness committed the same powers as Pope Eugenius had formerly given, to the end that they should proceed afresh in this cause. This was on the 17th of June, 1447. Their Eminences sub-delegated Anthony di Santo Vito, Bishop of Urbino, who had been named to that see after Bernardine's humble refusal to accept

it, by Pope Eugenius, having previously been archdeacon of the Church of Aquileja, John di Palena, Bishop of La Penna, who had already discharged this office, and the Auditor of the Rota, who examined the above-mentioned miracles, and others which had succeeded them, with renewed diligence, and then drew up the second process. Before, however, they could complete it, a series of curious events took place, which seemed to entail a protracted suspension of this cause, as will be explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEVERAL OBSTACLES TO BERNARDINE'S CANONIZATION.—S. CAPISTRAN OVERCOMES THEM, AND, BY THE VIRTUE OF OBEDIENCE, RENDERS IT SECURE.

THE enemy, foreseeing the advantage which those souls that had been instructed by the apostolic zeal of Bernardine whilst he yet lived would derive from his glorious promotion to public veneration, formed various plots at different times to cross the holy project. Besides the slanders of Amadeus de Landis related above, he suggested to certain prelates at the Court of Rome and to several friars, who felt jealousy of this great work, to make difficulties by alleging, according to their private judgment, some one thing and some another, against the cause of canonization, and to raise such an opposition that doubts were often entertained of the result of the process. S.

John Capistran, who laboured indefatigably to effect a happy termination of the cause, did not escape without many insults and reproaches. The Saint, trusting in God and in the merits of his holy friend, whom he often invoked to defend and promote his own cause, and to humble once for all the perverse hearts of its opponents, happily overcame their opposition, although it ceased not continually to break out in fresh attempts, so as even to cool the ardour which Pope Nicholas at first entertained in the promotion of the cause. Capistran, therefore, one day boldly presented himself at the Holy Father's feet, and, in order to animate him in the resolution he had formed, told him with profound humility, that if it pleased his Holiness, he would throw Bernardine's body into a furnace along with his own; that, if the fire consumed them, the Pope must attribute the result to the sins of the individual before him; but if they remained unhurt, he would know that it was God's Will that the prayer now preferred before him should be heard. At this great excess of charity the Pope could not contain his tears, and conceived an ardent wish to console one Saint as soon as possible by the canonization of the other.

About this time it happened somewhat remarkably that Bernardine ceased to work any miracles, so that he seemed in some sort to concur in the resistance of his opponents. S. John happened to be in the city of Aquila, quite intent, according to his wont, in working at this cause. The sick and suffering came from afar to no purpose; they approached the coffin in which lay the holy body of Bernardine, but to none of them did the Saint impart any improvement in health. S. Capistran encouraged the people, of

Aquila, who began to be much afflicted on this account, and told them to continue firm and not give way to distress, because assuredly Bernardine would before long work abundant miracles. Lent arrived, and no miracle having yet been manifested, S. John proceeded to comfort the people with the hope that they would see some at Easter. Nevertheless, Easter passed without any, and S. John, fearing for the confusion which might cover the people, himself, and the Saint, went at night to his tomb, and after saying a short prayer, laid before Bernardine in the language which one friend uses in speaking to another, the weight of anxiety and labour which he had taken up for his sake, and the confusion and scandal which had fallen upon everybody, bidding him, as he had during life been ever ready to obey the superior who was now addressing him, give proof of his obedience also after death; and he now charged him by that virtue, and on the part of the Holy Spirit, to perform some miracles, if he possessed sufficient merit with God. Next day the sick flocked to the spot from every quarter, and whereas before no one was healed, from this time forward no one went away without being restored to health.

About the same time, whilst the cause was receiving a powerful impulse, there arose another singular impediment. On the last day of October, 1447, the convent of S. Francis at Rieti witnessed the death of Brother Thomas of Florence, named da Scarlino, a lay-brother of the Observance, and, like S. Bernardine, a great promoter of that Institute: he was a man of very rigorous life, who, amongst other innumerable toils and trials, had suffered more than a year's severe imprisonment from the Turks. After his burial, his

tomb was illustrated with striking miracles in such abundance, that the devotion of the people towards Bernardine began to cool, and although his memory was fresh, and the glory of his miracles manifest, his name seemed to lose some part of the veneration attached to it; the more because, Rieti not being more than fifteen miles distant from Aquila, it was easy to transport the sick from one city to the other, so that a well-grounded fear began to be felt lest this circumstance should retard the canonization of Bernardine. Some evil-minded persons did not omit to take advantage of this incident to suggest to the Pope that greater deliberation should be employed in proceeding with the Saint's cause, and that an honour ought not so easily to be accorded to Bernardine which appeared equally due to Brother Thomas, unless indeed the Pope meant to prosecute the canonization of them both. Notice of these representations was given to S. John, and surmising that they would create a great obstacle to his holy views, he repaired in haste to Rieti, and presenting himself at the tomb of Brother Thomas, as he had formerly commanded Bernardine to work miracles, he now bade the lay-brother, under holy obedience, not to perform any until Bernardine had been inserted by the Church in the calendar of the Saints. The result was no less wonderful in this case than it had been in the other. Brother Thomas ceased to work miracles until Bernardine's canonization had been solemnly celebrated; after which, on a fresh command from the Minister of the Roman province, he resumed his former glorious works, to the great joy of the people of Rieti, who honoured the first of this new series of miracles with peals of bells and other tumultuous signs

of rejoicing. Thus did Heaven shew forth the holiness of Bernardine, who began to work at command marvellous actions, and also the power of the virtue of obedience, which ensures respect even from the blessed spirits reigning in glory.

CHAPTER IX.

PROCESSES ARE DRAWN UP FOR THE THIRD TIME.—FRESH PETITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COURTS FOR BERNARDINE'S CANONIZATION.—PROCESSES DRAWN UP FOR THE FOURTH TIME.—MEANWHILE THE SAINT CONTINUES TO SHINE STILL MORE GLORIOUSLY BY THE LUSTRE OF HIS MIRACLES.

It was the year 1448 when the three Cardinals, who were entrusted with Bernardine's cause, committed to Angelo da Capranica, Bishop, first of Ascoli, then of Rieti, and afterwards Cardinal, the office of examining the miracles which Bernardine had wrought in the Marca of Ancona, at Siena, and at Aquila. The Bishop undertook this work with great ardour, as he had S. John Capistran always at his side in the capacity of promoter of the cause, for that Saint had obtained letters of commission and sub-delegation from the three Cardinals. Being then at Siena, the Bishop and the Saint made diligent inquiry into the actions, habits, and manners of Bernardine, and his miracles in life and after death. God in His mercy granted meantime new favours daily to His servant's merits, in different parts of Italy and other lands, of such notoriety that it was no longer necessary to investigate the Saint's life, but to publish

and extol a sanctity which was manifested by such frequent and distinguished miracles.

Alphonso, king of Arragon and the Two Sicilies, receiving information of this fact, was induced to write again to Pope Nicholas : his letter bears date August 28, 1448, and he begs his Holiness with increased earnestness to further the cause, and enrol Bernardine in the catalogue of the Saints, since the works and miracles which he had performed, both alive and dead (and which were recorded in the third process at Siena), proved that he was already in the enjoyment of eternal happiness. This letter was supported by similar communications from different sovereigns, and by redoubled solicitations from the cities of Siena and Aquila. The Pope, thus pressed in so many ways to expedite the business, did not fail to urge it to a speedy end. The Cardinal of Taranto, one of the three judges delegated for this cause, died about this time, and the Pope appointed in his stead Cardinal Bessarione, of the title of the church of the Twelve Apostles, and Bishop of Frascati. Having then to send this dignitary as Legate to Bologna in the following year, he added to the commission Francis Condulmero, Cardinal-Bishop of Porto, and Vice-Chancellor of Holy Church, styled the Cardinal of Venice. These two Cardinals, with William d'Estouteville and Peter Barbo, had the merit of bringing their labours for the canonization of Bernardine to the desired consummation. The Bishop of Ascoli and S. Capistran toiled assiduously in the formation of processes for the fourth time, going over the whole life of Bernardine from his birth to his death ; examining the evidence brought forward, and trying both the former miracles and fresh ones which God, by Ber-

nardine's merits, was ever working in raising the dead, rescuing the agonizing from the jaws of death, and rendering to the sick of every sort the desired cure.

Whilst S. Capistran was engaged in this task, and was praying alone one day in his cell at Capriola, S. Bernardine appeared to him, and thanked his beloved friend for the unwearied exertions he had made to procure his exaltation. S. John returning to Rome full of heavenly consolation, related this occurrence to the Pope, who, after several secret consistories, and having previously delivered the process to the Cardinals, in order that each of their Eminences might examine it with all care at home, finally, in a public consistory held on the 15th of May, decided to enrol Bernardine in the calendar of the Saints. He had promised to give this decision in the month of October of the preceding year, whilst in the country of Fabriano, mentioning his intention to S. John Capistran and S. James della Marca, who was one of the labourers in procuring the consummation of this holy work. For the same end the Venerable Brother Francis of Pavia poured out continual prayers to God, and was assured of their final acceptance by divine revelation.

CHAPTER X.

SOLEMN CANONIZATION OF S. BERNARDINE.

THE schism caused by the Council of Basle in erecting Felix V. Pope in opposition to the lawful Pontiff, Eugenius IV., had disturbed the peace of the Church for upwards of nine years, and contributed much to retard Bernardine's canonization. Peace, however, being

at last restored to the Church, Pope Nicholas V. on Whit-Sunday, May the 24th, 1450, celebrated this event, declaring that Bernardine was living and reigning with God in union with the other Saints in glory. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of S. Vincent Ferrer, who did not receive the honour of canonization from Pope Calixtus III. until five years and thirty-six days later, although he died thirty-six years, all but forty-five days, before Bernardine. The joy which attended this solemnity is not to be described ; the magnificence displayed was very great, as the people of Aquila and Siena expended large sums of money on the occasion ; and the concourse of spectators and their rejoicing exceeded anything that had ever before been known on such occasions. It was the year of the universal jubilee, so that a countless multitude of pilgrims of every nation from the most distant countries (amongst the rest the envoys of Prester John, monarch of Abyssinia) had been drawn to Rome. There was also a great assemblage of religious of all orders, but particularly of Franciscans, who had gathered to the number of 3,800, others say 5,000, for the celebration of the general Chapter held in S. Maria di Araceli, which had been notified the year before by S. John Capistran, who wished thus to render the ceremony more splendid, illustrious, and memorable. Nor should we omit a circumstance which perhaps may seem more worthy of notice, and more honourable to the Saint. The canonization of S. Bernardine was witnessed by three friars of his own institute, who were afterwards enrolled in the catalogue of Saints. They were S. Diego of Alcalà, canonized by Pope Sixtus V. ; S. John Capistran, by Pope Alexander VIII. ; and S. James della Marca, by Pope Benedict XIII.

A procession of Franciscans far more numerous than usual, set out from the convent of Araceli, preceded by a splendid banner, which bore the most holy Name of Jesus, as preached and manifested by Bernardine to the people; and as they went with lighted torches in their hands, they sang hymns of praise to God, until they reached the famous Basilica of S. Peter. As they passed they everywhere met all the signs of rejoicing; the streets were strewn with fresh boughs of trees, and lined by an interminable crowd of people of both sexes, whilst others crowded the walls and roofs of the houses to behold this joyful spectacle, which they had never before witnessed. The interior of the Vatican Basilica was adorned with rich and costly ornaments, and blazed with a forest of lights. In the centre was a raised stage, in shape like that of a theatre. The Pope, after the usual ceremonies, the offerings of the appointed presents, and an exact performance of the sacred rites appropriate to the occasion, delivered an eloquent sermon in praise of Bernardine's saintly life, and solemnly sang Mass, assisted by the Cardinals (of whom some writers reckon forty-four, others only nineteen) and many bishops and other prelates. The solemnity of this ceremony was such that many persons declared that they never beheld on any like occasion so much pomp and magnificence. The Pope then enjoined all the prelates and the rest of the faithful to celebrate the feast of S. Bernardine annually on the 20th of May, the day of his holy death, and in order to animate and increase the fervour of the people in visiting his body and keeping his festival, granted for ever to all those who, after confession and communion, should visit his shrine on his feast, an indulgence of seven years and as many quarantines.

The same Pontiff composed the bull of canonization, which begins, "*Misericordias Domini*," and wrote the first copy with his own hand, publishing it in June, 1450.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CITIES AND OTHER PLACES WHICH HAD BEEN SANCTIFIED BY S. BERNARDINE'S PREACHING REJOICE WITH PIOUS POMP AT HIS CANONIZATION.—CHURCHES AND ALTARS ARE ERECTED IN HIS HONOUR.

THE countless multitudes of people of various kingdoms and provinces who were at Rome, as we have stated, for the jubilee, upon their return to their native places, soon spread the fame of the sanctity of Bernardine, which Holy Church had lately approved with her most solemn honours; the tidings were everywhere received, both in adjacent and remote countries, with joy, and the Saint's triumph was made the occasion of festivity and spiritual rejoicing. In Italy particularly, every city, village, and hamlet, however insignificant, attested their pious congratulations with the newly proclaimed Saint by devout processions and other festal demonstrations, for they remembered the great benefits which he had conferred on them whilst alive by his holy teaching. We may thence easily conceive what happened, especially in the city of Aquila, which could not contain itself for joy at seeing its new protector, who had distinguished it by conferring on it the possession of his holy body, thus raised to the high honour of public veneration. And

again, with regard to his birth-place, it is easier to imagine than to express the joy which the city of Siena displayed at the new lustre shed upon it.

As soon as the people of that city received the happy intelligence, they prepared to celebrate the triumph of their sainted townsman with the most sumptuous manifestation of devotion and gladness. They erected a chapel upon a raised flooring, about eight feet high and thirty feet wide, in the great square before the doors of the town-hall, where the Saint used to preach. Within they put up tapestry and other hangings of silk and purple. In the centre was an altar blazing with gold and silver ornaments; and chairs were set out richly covered. All the squares and streets, narrow and wide, were strewn with ivy, myrtle, and laurel branches. The whole city, the churches and chapels, manifested their joy by decking their doors and archways with garlands and wreaths woven with flowers and ivy-berries hung in festoons upon curtains of silk. At the corners and at the top of the streets altars were erected for the occasion, all ornamented with choice statues and paintings. The figure of the Saint was everywhere displayed, either in sculpture or skilful imitation of it. All the citizens of both sexes, old and young, prepared to celebrate the glorious solemnity. Lofty trees were transplanted, and afforded a grateful shade to the passer-by in the streets, and in every direction the eye rested upon different shows and sportive representations. The most remarkable of these was one exhibited at the top of the high tower over the chapel near the town-hall. Stages superbly adorned here rose one above the other to a considerable height, and were crowned

with consummate art by the figures of an assembly of blessed spirits. After these arrangements were completed and a holiday proclaimed, the solemnity was joyfully opened by the grandees of the city amidst general applause, upon the return of the envoys who had been sent to Rome from that city.

On the 14th of June all the clergy, secular and regular, assembling in the great Basilica, set forward in procession towards the square, followed by the Bishop, who closed the procession, being magnificently vested, and carrying the sacred vessels in his hand, accompanied by the canons and other distinguished ecclesiastics, and followed by a numerous retinue of gentlemen, behind whom came an immense crowd of men and women. With this train the Bishop, singing hymns of praise, mounted the throne which had been erected for him, and sang first Vespers with his clergy in honour of S. Bernardine. Next day, with still greater pomp, the Bishop solemnly celebrated Mass in the same place, which was illuminated with a profusion of lights. The curtains which had been hung to conceal the scene grouped upon the summit of the stage near the tower were then removed, and at once, to the sound of every kind of musical instrument, and a delightful harmony of voices, appeared a kind of paradise, where the Saints were represented in different directions, shedding around them rays of light. A figure representing the person of Bernardine was next raised, to the astonishment of the beholders, from the earth, and received by this choir of blessed spirits into heaven. The people were full of devotion, and gave thanks to God, exalting the merits of S. Bernardine, who in life had inflamed their hearts to the love of

piety by his teaching, and now, after death, continued this work by his sanctity.

When the Bishop elevated the sacred Host, there was seen another beautiful spectacle, which completed the astonishment of those present, both citizens and strangers, who, returning from Rome, took Siena on their way. For there suddenly flew out of a tree which stood in the middle of the square, an innumerable quantity of coloured rockets, some of which bounded against the walls opposite, whilst others flew upwards out of sight of the spectators. The noise and brilliancy of this discharge so engaged the attention of the spectators, that they seemed to see rather the effects of supernatural agency than of human art. At dusk another display of fire-works took place, and all the city towers and church-steeple were illuminated with lanterns, whilst bonfires were kindled through all the surrounding country. The pealing of bells, blowing of trumpets, rolling of drums, and sounds from other instruments concluded the evening's festivity. For many centuries no such joyous spectacle had been seen in Siena; and to render it still more complete in every way, meat and drink were freely distributed during these days to every one who wanted them. On the third day, being June the 16th, a solemn procession took its way through the city amidst an incredible throng of clergy and people in admirable order, and with a splendour and general fervour and devotion which baffle description. Lastly, on the fourth day a great feast took place in the Franciscan Church of S. Francis, where High Mass was sung in presence of the magistrates and all the population of Siena.

Nor did the spiritual joy and fervent devotion con-

ceived by the people of this city in their fellow-citizen's regard terminate with the joyful demonstrations and pious enthusiasm of these days. From that time to the present the illustrious corporation of the city repair to the Church of S. Francis. on the 20th of May in each year, being S. Bernardine's feast, and are met by the Fathers of the Observance, who go in procession to the gateway of the square carrying the Saint's mantle, which is brought from Capriola for the occasion, and afterwards exposed in the chapel dedicated to the Saint by the noble house of Bandini of Castiglioncello. The magistrates then present an offering of fifty-eight pounds of wax, and the trades, which follow them, another of one hundred and eight pounds; the town council assist at a Pontifical High Mass, and hear a discourse in praise of the Saint, delivered by a young man of noble blood, who is admitted on that day to dine at the town-hall. After Mass they take their way to the church or oratory of the confraternity which bears S. Bernardine's name, where are venerated the sacred tablet on which the Saint drew with his own hand the most holy Name of Jesus, and other relics of him. The confraternity on that occasion endows nine girls with a marriage portion, and releases two prisoners, whom, on their return, they conduct behind the statue of the Saint.

After Bernardine's canonization altars were immediately raised in his honour in various places, and particularly in the metropolitan church, where a relic of the Saint is preserved in veneration. A bell in the tower of this church bears the name of S. Bernardine inscribed upon it, and, in memory of his singular devotion to the Blessed Queen of Heaven, gives the

signal for the Angelus at day-break and at dusk. The Saint likewise has an altar in the oratory of the Confraternity della Morte, and in the hospital of La Scala, where his miracles are attested by votive pictures and other records of cures and graces in the form of silver or waxen images. Another altar stands in the Saint's name on the hill of Capriola, outside Siena. At this place, too, is the little chamber which he occupied, now converted into a chapel, and, when new buildings were added to the convent, removed into the church. Some sermons and other volumes written by the Saint's own hand are here preserved.

CHAPTER XII.

S. JOHN CAPISTRAN, IN HIS APOSTOLIC LEGATION, PUBLISHES EVERYWHERE THE GLORIES OF S. BERNARDINE.—BY HIS POWERFUL LETTERS HE PREVAILS ON THE CITY OF AQUILA TO ERECT A MAGNIFICENT CHURCH FOR THE SAINT'S REMAINS.

THE pious affection of S. Capistran for his holy Bernardine would not allow him to omit any occasion of extolling and magnifying his friend's merits. As soon as his Lenten discourses at Venice were terminated, he set out by Treviso and Friuli for Germany. Arriving at a spot near Treviso, where he had to cross the river Sile, he was refused a passage by the ferryman because he could not pay the fare. Drawing aside, and making a short prayer, he had recourse to the merits of his holy friend, and spread the Saint's habit, which he carried with him, upon the water. Wonderful to relate, the water began to ebb

away and render the ford passable ; but as soon as Capistran, his companions, and the donkey which was laden with the luggage, had reached the bank, the river rose again to its previous level. Resuming his journey, S. John everywhere wrought miracles, particularly in Porto Gruaro and in the village of S. Vito, where he left the relic of Bernardine's blood ; and he excited the people of Udine and Cividale di Austria and Gemona, to devotion towards the new Saint. He did the same on his way through Carinthia, Styria, and Austria. Then, having begun to discharge his Apostolic commission, he exalted the glories of the new Saint everywhere, and procured the erection of churches and convents, chapels, and altars, to his honour in Germany, Moravia, Hungary, Bohemia, Silesia, Transylvania, and Poland, in which he hung up the beds, sticks, chairs, and crutches of the halt and infirm whom he cured with the Saint's relics. He was at the defence of Belgrade, and as guide and captain of the soldiers of the cross, bore in his hand a standard on which the cross was depicted on one side, as the glorious ensign of the holy war there conducted, and on the other the figure of S. Bernardine, who, by his intercession with God, contributed to that famous victory.

But amidst the great spiritual consolation that Capistran experienced in seeing the knowledge and veneration of the new Saint thus spread to such remote lands, there remained one source of sorrow in the fact that the people of Aquila, who had been so distinguished by the special favour of Heaven as to possess the holy body of this Saint, could not bring themselves to erect a church in which the sacred relic might be deposited and preserved. He

wrote them a letter from Egburg in Moravia dated the 10th of October, 1451, in which he laid his prayer before the magistrates and nobles of the city for the building of this new temple; and with the same view he obtained from King Alphonso an alms of 500 ducats a year for ten years, beginning with the 1st of September, 1452.

But the Aquilani, satisfied with having appointed as guardians of the sacred body some brethren of the Observance, by whom the divine offices were celebrated in the little chapel of the Church of S. Francis of the Conventuals, where the holy remains lay, troubled themselves no further about building a new church and convents for the friars. Hence these Observantines, although they entertained the highest esteem for the sacred treasure, yet, being obliged with great fatigue and inconvenience to live in another house, besides the danger thereby incurred of admitting some relaxation of their severe discipline, determined at the end of ten years to resign their charge entirely to the Conventuals. This resolution was taken with the approval of the principal Fathers, Bernardine of Fossa, Liberato of Aquila, and Francis of Pizzoli, in a chapter celebrated at S. Nicholas' near Sulmona, by the Observantines of the province of the Abruzzo. But it was requisite to gain the consent of the city authorities, and they indignantly refused to listen to such a proposal. Their refusal being announced to the Minister-general of the Order, he did all in his power to obtain the desired change by placing in that convent to which S. Francis's church was attached friars, who, by their modesty, retirement, and devotion to prayer, should equal the Observantines. But his plans failed; for

the Aquilani would not consent to the departure of the Observantines, but determined to build a stately chapel for the holy relic, still however in the church of the Conventuals.

Whilst preparing to raise this chapel, they received fresh letters from S. Capistran, dated from Cracow, May the 12th, 1454. In these the holy man set forth the great affliction of his soul at hearing that they neglected the idea of building the new church, which they had decreed some time since, and complained of their ingratitude in warm and feeling language; blaming them for their insufficient esteem of the sacred charge entrusted to them, and bidding them fear the indignation of the Saints. As he had obtained 5,000 ducats from King Alphonsus for this building, the Aquilani, who had received so many benefits from the Saint, ought in justice to make up what was still wanting to the required sum. In the end he threatened them with misfortunes and suffering, if they refused to comply with his suggestions. S. John enjoyed a high reputation with the people of Aquila, and this letter created a great sensation in the city, awaking remorse and terror, so that the citizens asked pardon of S. Bernardine for their fault, and resolved without more ado to carry out the decree, and to build the church and convent for the brethren of the Observance at once.

A pious emulation then arose amongst the citizens of the four quarters of the city, and seemed likely to create some hindrance to the execution of the work. Every one was anxious to enrich his own quarter with the precious treasure; and a contention arose as to the site of the intended church. But this dispute was soon terminated. Information being received that

S. James della Marca had left Naples, and was coming in the direction of Aquila on his way to the Marca, he was immediately requested by letters from the magistrates and the Count of Montorio, Peter Lalle Camponesco, to rejoice them and their city by his presence. The Saint gratified them, and coming to Aquila, spent some days there. On one of these, Sunday, July the 20th, 1454, he preached in the square of S. Francis, and read S. John Capistran's letter to the multitude who had gathered to hear this venerable man, the former associate of S. Bernardine, and a great friend of S. Capistran; having moved them to tears as if he had been discoursing on Good Friday on the Passion of Christ, he went on to persuade them to refer to his judgment the choice of a site for the new church, assuring them that he would not give way to any human respect in his decision. When his sermon was finished generous offerings were made, and soon afterwards, at his bidding, a meeting was held of the clergy, secular and regular, and with the consent of the city authorities, a solemn procession was ordered, in which the figure of S. Bernardine had precedence.

From the square of S. Francis they proceeded to a spot near the great hospital and church of S. Alò, when the blessed Brother James, who was followed by countless crowds of people, stopped, and declaring that to be the spot which he, in the name of the Holy Spirit, selected, he marked out the ground for the new building in the form of a cross. He gives an account of this scene in a letter, which he wrote that same day, after the function, to S. Capistran for that holy man's spiritual consolation. It runs thus:—"Assuredly, my much revered Father, the

glory and blessing of the most High was here manifest. I, the unworthy servant of God and S. Bernardine, took the spade, and at the first stroke called upon the Eternal Father, and was seconded by my dear son, the chamberlain of the council of Aquila, and his excellency the Count. At the second stroke I pronounced the Name, and invoked the august Majesty of the Son of God, and my dearly beloved sons repeating it after me, we laid the first stone of the church with the invocation of the Holy Ghost, and set up a cross in the middle in the name of Mary. Lastly, at the foot of the cross, we called upon the name of our loving father S. Bernardine, with such joy, jubilation, and hymns of praise as my tongue would never be able to describe. I think that the church will soon be finished."

CHAPTER XIII.

TRANSLATION OF THE BODY OF S. BERNARDINE.

THIS famous church, when completed, ranked for its dimensions and noble architecture amongst the most considerable of Italy. As soon as it was deemed capable of receiving within its walls the sacred deposit of Bernardine's body, the translation of that relic was fixed for Whit-Sunday, May the 17th, 1472. The Observantines had, two days previously, celebrated their general chapter at the convent of S. Julian near the walls of Aquila, and had gathered there to the number of nearly 2,000, not so much for the chapter's sake as to be present at the sacred cere-

mony. Their number was swelled by a great multitude of people, who came in for the holiday from different parts of the Abruzzo and other more distant provinces.

With this retinue, then, and every display of splendour and solemnity, the sacred body was removed, amidst sacred hymns and pious chanting, from the church of S. Francis of the Conventuals, in which it had rested for twenty-eight years, to the new church of the Observantines, which was dedicated to the Saint. The ceremony was performed by Francis Agrifilo, who had become Bishop of Aquila a short time previously on the resignation of Cardinal Amico Agrifilo. The body, which was found whole and incorrupt, was vested in a habit of silk, with a golden chain for a girdle, and was laid in an ark of crystal, adorned and bound all round with gold and silver bands of the value of three thousand crowns. This ark was then placed within the former coffin of iron.

Amongst the many distinguished personages who were so fortunate as to witness this solemn translation were Catherine, Queen of Bosnia, and the B. Bernardine of Feltre, who attended the general chapter as companion to Brother Louis Gonzaga, of the family of the princes of Mantua, who was vicar of the province of S. Anthony.

Pope Sixtus IV., by whose command this translation took place, desiring to give it all the solemnity possible, granted to all the faithful who should assist at the same, and worship in the new church, a plenary indulgence, and likewise an indulgence of one hundred years, and as many quarantines to those who should visit this church in any future year for ever on the feast of S. Bernardine. Five years later

twelve Cardinals, according to the custom of those times, granted a hundred years' indulgence to all the faithful who should visit this church of S. Bernardine at Aquila, and there offer alms upon the feasts of the B. Virgin's Immaculate Conception or Nativity, of S. John the Evangelist, of the Stigmata of S. Francis, or the anniversary of the consecration of the building.

It is not known in what part of the new church the sacred body was placed at the date of this translation. Some say, however, that it was in a chapel built by Covella, Countess of Celano ; and that some relics of the Saint, after the translation, were placed under the altar of the Immaculate Conception in the family chapel of the Benedetti of Aquila, who caused a beautiful silver vase to be constructed for the purpose of holding them, which for greater security they enclosed in a sarcophagus of marble.

CHAPTER XIV.

OTHER MINOR TRANSLATIONS OF S. BERNARDINE'S BODY.

LESS solemn translations have in later times followed the solemn event of which the last chapter treated. The first of these occurred in 1481, when Louis XI., King of France, in fulfilment of a vow made to S. Bernardine, and having obtained by the merits of that Saint the life of a dying son according to some writers, but according to other and more probable accounts, his own cure from the falling sickness, sent as a gift to the city of Aquila for the convent of S.

Bernardine, a very beautiful silver-gilt coffer, within which the holy body was to be deposited. The weight of this coffer was twelve hundred and nine pounds; it was eight palms long, and five high, of exquisite workmanship, supported by four stags, also of silver. The value of this piece of art amounted to twenty thousand crowns. The outside was ornamented with different figures of silver, and on the four sides were seen the figures of the B. Virgin and S. Bernardine presenting to our Lady the king girt with his sword, as his majesty had himself seen in sleep after receiving the miraculous favour.

Those who, by the king's order, brought this coffer to Aquila passed through Rome. Thus Pope Sixtus IV. had an opportunity of seeing it, and at the prayer of Peter Caxxon, the king's secretary, blessed and consecrated it, and moreover on the 28th of June, 1481, issued a Bull which begins, *Cum charissimus*, and is addressed to the magistrate and citizens of Aquila, in which his Holiness forbids any one under pain of excommunication to use this coffer at any time for other purposes than that to which it had been destined by the piety of the most Christian king. The secretary, to whom King Louis had consigned this votive gift, arriving at Aquila, presented it, together with letters from his royal master, to the mayor and citizens; after these had been read, it was brought to the church of S. Maria di Colomaggio, and was kept there for some days in sight of all the people, who crowded to gaze at it and admire its beauty. At last a solemn procession of all orders of citizens was appointed, and the new coffer carried on a triumphal car to the church of S. Bernardine.

The see of Aquila was then occupied by Louis

Borsio, and we may suppose that that prelate presided at the translation. First of all the sacred body was laid in a new crystal ark, which was put within the new silver shrine given by the King of France, and both were then enclosed in a third box of iron, secured with six locks. The keys of three of these were kept by the friars, and of the other three by the magistrates of the city, so that neither party could open the case without the concurrence of the other. The iron coffin was further secured by an enclosure of strong iron railings, to pass within which two other keys were needed, which were kept by the Apostolic Syndic, or secular Procurator of the friars. The permission of the mayor was also required before the gate could be opened to any one, all which precautions were adopted for the safer keeping and greater veneration of the holy relic. This system was maintained, it seems, until the year 1505, when James Baroncelli, a citizen and merchant of Aquila, from his singular devotion towards S. Bernardine, erected at his own expense a chapel of great magnificence, and a stately mausoleum or shrine, which pious work cost him nine thousand crowns.

The holy body in its silver coffer was then placed in this chapel. It remained uninjured till the year 1539, when Philibert Chalon, Prince of Orange and viceroy of Naples for the Emperor Charles V., being then in command of that monarch's army in the war against Lotrechio, after having despoiled many cities with foul and sordid rapacity, and forcibly extorted 120,000 crowns from the Aquilani, not sparing crosses, chalices, or other sacred vessels, laid his sacrilegious hands also upon the shrine of S. Bernardine, and stole the precious coffer which enclosed his

body, in order to coin it for his soldiers' pay, as he had embezzled the sums given him for that object. But the avenging hand of God soon fell upon him, for besides a narrow escape which he had upon leaving the city with his army in winter-time, when he was overtaken by a snowstorm and whirlwind that destroyed many of his followers, he was struck, a short time after, by two musket-balls, trodden under-foot by horses, and stripped by the enemy, so that when his dead body was at last found, it could hardly be recognised.

The magistrates of Aquila, although that city had been so rapaciously impoverished, soon contrived, with remarkable munificence, to compensate for the loss of the French king's present, by constructing another silver shrine, of inferior weight, but greater beauty, than the one which had been stolen; and they put the case of crystal, in which the holy body lies as fresh as if living, within this new ark of silver, the value of which was about fourteen thousand crowns. By the contrivance of some wheels skilfully disposed, the coffer can be lifted up without difficulty whenever the sacred relic is exposed to the veneration either of the people or of any pious princes who come to pay it their homage. The appointed days for publicly exposing the relic are only two; the 20th of May, on which the holy man happily reposed in the Lord, and the 29th of August, the feast of the Decollation of S. John Baptist, when a countless multitude of people pours into Aquila to gain the great indulgence granted by Pope S. Peter Celestine V. to the church of S. Maria di Colemaggio (in which his holy body was afterwards deposited), in memory of his having been raised to the Pontificate on that

day. Pope Clement VIII. issued a decree on this subject, for, being desirous to correct the excessive readiness with which S. Bernardine's body was exposed to the people, after referring the question to the Cardinals and the Congregation of Rites, he prohibited the public exposition except on the two days named, and likewise any private exposition on other days to any individuals except kings, Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and the viceroy of Naples.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE RELICS OF S. BERNARDINE, AND OF HIS SACRED PORTRAIT.

AS the body of S. Bernardine is preserved, as we have said, incorrupt and entire in the shrine in which it was laid, we cannot of course find relics of the same in other places, but his habit and parts of his clothes, and other things which were sanctified by touching his person when living, supply this want. Several cities of Italy and of other countries pride themselves on the possession and veneration of such relics, and we have already mentioned some in different places of this biography.

To pass from the relics to the pictures of the Saint ; one is preserved in the sacristy of S. Job and S. Bernardine at Venice, being a half-length likeness, in coloured chalk, representing the Saint in the cowl. It is preserved within a kind of reliquary, with a gilt moulding, below the ducal family shield of the Doge Christopher Moro. This is supposed to be a venerable memento, which that religious

prince kept by him of his saintly friend, and which he either received from Aquila after the Saint's death, or caused to be painted in his life-time, as he then already venerated him as a saint; the latter supposition seems more probable if we compare the picture in question with the description and representations of the Saint's face whilst he lay on his bier, which make him thin and withered, as he would naturally be from age and from his wasting disorder. Such a portrait of him is venerated at Siena. It was taken from the original, and a copy of it may be found in the additions to the Bollandists' fifth volume for May. It resembles the figure on the medal which the above-mentioned Venetian patrician prided himself upon having in his select museum, and which was cast in the Saint's honour in 1456, by Anthony Marescotto of Ferrara. The portrait at Siena is surrounded by an inscription, taken from the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which laconically describes all that we have said with regard to the Saint's life.

To return to the first portrait, which, as we have intimated, seems to be the true and genuine likeness of Bernardine's head and bust whilst he lived; it is the original of the picture on the frontispiece. The Saint was bald, and of a ruddy, or bright-coloured countenance. He did not wear his beard long, as such was not the custom of those times, that fashion having been introduced about the year 1484, as we read that the first Italian gentleman who wore it habitually was Francis II., Marquis of Mantua. Later in life, Bernardine had his mouth wrinkled, and his chin projecting, which is a sign that he had few teeth remaining, and gives him the

appearance of a man above seventy. He is painted with the Name of Jesus in his hands, depicted on a tablet, encompassed and crowned with rays like the sun's, because, as we have seen, in his sermons he proposed this holy Name in that form to the worship of the people. Some add those words of S. John, "*Pater, manifestavi Nomen Tuum hominibus,*" because the Saint died, as we have related, at the hour of the first Vespers of our Lord's Ascension, when the brethren were singing that antiphon for the Magnificat. Three episcopal mitres are put at his feet, in sign of his humble and generous refusal of the three bishoprics of Siena, Ferrara, and Urbino. Some painters also set a star above his head, to represent that brilliant meteor, which, as above related, appeared over his head when he was preaching the glories of the Blessed Virgin at Aquila.

CHAPTER XVI.

S. BERNARDINE'S PANEGYRICS OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS. — SOME DEVOUT ASPIRATIONS WHICH HE TAUGHT TO SUNDRY PERSONS.

BEFORE we close this work, we will lay before the pious reader, for his spiritual comfort, some of the many and devout praises which S. Bernardine, in various sermons, lavished on the sweet Name of Jesus, which was given Him by the Eternal Father, prefigured in Holy Scripture by the three persons of that name who preceded Him, foretold by several prophets, announced by the angel, revealed by the Blessed Virgin, preached by the Apostles, and venerated and worshipped by all men. To this we shall

add a pious exercise of ardent aspirations and ejaculatory prayers, which the same Saint taught his hearers.

O Nomen Dei Jesu exaltatum super omne nomen. O triumphale Nomen. O gaudium angelorum. O lætitia justorum. O pavor inferorum, in te omnis spes veniæ; in te omnis spes gratiæ; in te omnis spes gloriæ.

O Nomen dulcorosum; tu peccatoribus veniam præstas; tu mores renovas, tu mentes divina dulcedine reple; tu phantasmata pellis. O Nomen gratiosum; per te alta mysteria revelantur: per te animæ ad divinum amorem inflammantur, roborantur in pugna, et a cunctis periculis liberantur.

O Nomen gloriosum; Nomen desiderabile; Nomen delectabile, Nomen admirabile, Nomen venerabile. Tu dulcissime Nomen regis Jesu sic paulatim ad cœli fastigia per gratiarum charismata mentes fidelium sursum rapis, ut omnes, qui ad devotionem hujus Nominis intrant, virtute ejus gloriam inveniant, et salutem per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum.

Aspirations for every Day in the Week.

On Sunday (S. Bernardine says), raise your heart to God, and say:

O bone Jesu, fac, ut te amem ardentem.

O good Jesus, make me love Thee ardently.

These words (said the Saint) often considered in spirit and pronounced in word are of an admirable efficacy.

On Monday:—

Dulcis amor Jesu, fac me sentire, quam immenso amore nos amasti et amas.

Jesus, sweet Love, make me feel with what unbounded love Thou hast loved and still lovest us.

These words should be pondered with earnestness.

On Tuesday :—

Amorosissime Jesu, vellem te amare, sed sine te non possum.

Most loving Jesus, I would fain love Thee, but without Thee I am unable.

These words are to be repeated frequently for a long time, and with conversion of heart.

On Wednesday :—

Amor meus Jesu, fac me mori amore Tui.

Jesus, my Love, make me die of love of Thee.

This should be uttered with great fervour of heart.

On Thursday, say thus :—

Amor meus Jesu, da mihi ad Te amorem ferventem, humile obsequium, et regramen, hoc est, continuum sensum tuorum beneficiorum ac Te laudandi et benedicendi.

Jesus, my Love, give me fervent love of Thee, with humble service and thankfulness, which is a constant sense of Thy favours, and an unceasing spirit of praise and blessing.

This ejaculation should be pronounced with great sweetness of heart.

On Friday, say :—

O mi Jesu, pro me crucifixe, eviscera Te in me, et clavis Tui amoris Te in me totum confige.

O my Jesus, Who wast crucified for me, pour out Thyself upon me, and with the nails of Thy love attach Thyself to my whole being.

This ejaculation should be preferred with all the power of heart and body.

On Saturday, say :—

O Jesu Amor dulcissime et gloriosissime, quando de Te totus inebriabor? Quando in Te visibiliter

inebriabor? Quando tibi sic conjungar ut Te in nullo offendam et a Te separari non valeam? Quamdiu a facie tua elongabor? Esse sine Te, est mihi dolor continuus et quasi mors æterna. O dulcissime Jesu gloriosum Nomen tuum adoro, et me Tibi cordialiter commendo.

O Jesus, most sweet and glorious Love, when shall I be all inebriated with Thee? When shall I be inebriated with the sight of Thee? When shall I be so united with Thee as to offend Thee in nothing, and to be inseparable from Thee? How long shall I be separated from Thy Face? To be without Thee, is to me continual pain, and, in a manner, eternal death. O most sweet Jesus, I adore Thy glorious Name, and recommend myself from my heart to Thee.

In this prayer we should sojourn as on the Sabbath, which signifies day of rest. Other like praises and ardent aspirations occur in S. Bernardine's works, to which we refer the pious reader, satisfied with having given this sample to the greater glory of the Saint, who was enamoured of Jesus, and of His most sweet Name.

CONCLUSION.

Pious reader, we have reached the end of this compilation of the life of the glorious S. Bernardine of Siena. You have seen therein, as in a mirror, the course, carried on year by year, of his most saintly life, and of the infinite labours, so to speak, undergone by him in his apostolic ministry. Throughout Italy, for six and twenty years, if you reckon from the year when his name first grew famous, or forty, if you prefer to date from the beginning of his preaching, were

these labours continued. If, in the perusal of this work, you have met any or many things worthy of blame, lay it to my score, for mine is all that is not well written. But if you think any praise due to the work, render it all to God, the Author of all good. We have learned this lesson from our Saint, who, at the end of his Lenten course de Christiana Religione, amongst other things has left the following words: "Asserting moreover, with all our heart, that of all the things which we have written in this book, whatever is unworthy we attribute to ourselves, and if there be anything worthy, it is due to the gift of Him Who is neither bounded by space nor changed by time, Who is infinite, eternal, blessed, and worthy to be praised for ever and ever. Amen."

Enough, then, that you learn from what you have read in this book to correct the evils (if unhappily they exist in you), against which S. Bernardine by his preaching gained such renowned triumphs, that you excite yourself to imitate the virtues, of which he has given you in himself such brilliant examples, and lastly, that conceiving an ever-growing reverence, veneration, and love for the most holy Name of Jesus, which was preached and exalted with supreme honour by S. Bernardine, you sanctify with It every action, and diligently bear It as a seal of eternal life impressed upon your heart.

INDEX.

- ABUSE**, a singular, in Milan, 222
 Acciapaccio, de, Nicolas, Cardinal of Capua, 297
 Agazzaro, Bartholomew, 199
 Agriflo, Francis, bishop of Aquila, 325
 Albergati, degli, Nicholas, 122, 156
 Albert, Br. of Sarziano, 115 ; follows the Saint, 120 ; preaches, 121 ; returns from the East to Florence, 219, 229 ; reminded by the Saint of the dangers of honours, 230 ; made by the Pope Vicar-general of the whole Order, 242 ; President of the Chapter held in Padua, 251
 Alberti, degli, Cardinal Albert, 297
 Albizeschi, house of, 2, 7
 ———, degli, Bartolomea, 28 ; saintly life of, 29
 Albrici, Magdalen, a holy nun, 88
 Alessandria, 54
 Almsgiving of the Saint, 6
 Alphonso, King of Arragon, 297, 310
 Alsano, Peter, 85 ; founds a house of the Observantines in Bergamo, 108
 Ancona, the Marca of, 185
 Andrea, 165
 Angelo, Fra, of Civitella, 60
 Angelo. *See* Pesche
 Angels, S. Mary of the, convent of, 8 ; founded by the Saint, 82
 Antichrist, 75 ; the Saint called the messenger of, 149
 Antony, S., of Padua, 146
 Aquila, the Saint preaches in, 215 ; death of the Saint in, 279, riot in, 288 ; petitions for the canonization of the Saint, 296 ; rejoicings in when the Saint was canonized, 314 ; neglects the Saint, 322
 Arezzo, the Saint visits, 134 ; devil worship in, 135
 Aspirations for each day in the week, 333
 Assisi, the Saint visits, 138, 226, 271
 Austerities of the Saint, 20, 31, 40, 49
 Avogadri, the, 241
 Baccano di, Antony, Chancellor of Aquila, 296

- Bagio, da, Antony, miraculous meal of, 284
 Baglioni, de', Andrew John, bishop of Perugia, 291
 Balardi, de', James, 172
 Baptist, Br., of Bologna, 231
 Barbaro, Francis, 115, 240, 259; cowardice of, 158
 Barbo, Cardinal Peter, 298, 304
 Bartholomew of Gano, 219, 232
 Bartholomew, Br., 178
 Bartholomew of Urbino becomes a friar-minor, 249
 Bartolo, Charles, bishop of Siena, 199
 Bartolomea, aunt of the Saint, 29, 238
 Basle, convent of, 200, 203, 311
 Battuti, the brotherhood of, 113
 Becino, John, 115
 Belgrade, siege of, 320
 Belluno, the Saint escorted to, 116; conversion of, 119
 Benedetti, Lazzaro, 294
 Benedict, Br., of Morsico, miraculous cure of, 284
 Benvoglianti, Leonard, 296
 Berdini, Fra Albert, 60
 Bergamo, visited by the Saint, 83; converted, 85
 Bernardine, B., of Feltre, 103, 325
 Bernardine, S., birth of, 4; compassion of, for the poor, 7;
 early piety of, 9; strikes a nobleman for impertinence, 11,
 and pelts off men with stones, 12; deceives his cousin in
 jest, 15; devout to our Lady, 16, 17; serves in the hospital,
 22; falls ill, 27; nurses an aged aunt, 28; called into re-
 ligion, 33; becomes a friar-minor, 37; is professed, 44;
 builds a monastery in Capriola, 49; goes to Milan, 63;
 preaches in Milan, 65; reforms the people, 72; preaches
 in Liguria, 77; reforms a relaxed convent in Milan,
 81; crosses the lake before Mantua on his cloak, 92;
 Vicar of the Order in Umbria and Tuscany, 100; visits
 Venice, 104, 258; recalls a murdered man to life, 110;
 visits Padua, 112; visits Vicenza, 113; preaches in Treviso,
 116; visits Belluno, 117; Ferrara, 121; Bologna, 122;
 Florence, 126; Volterra, 128; Prato, 129; Siena, 131, 268;
 puts an end to gambling in Siena, 133; visits Arezzo, 134;
 Perugia, 139, 271; Gubbio, 143; Foligno, 144; founds
 four new houses, 146; accused of heresy, 149; summoned
 to Rome, 151; defended by S. John Capistran, 160; acquit-
 ted, 161; preaches in Rome, 164; named bishop of Siena,
 167; return of, to Tuscany, 177; devotion of, to our Lady, 178;
 preaches in Ferrara, 182; in Modena, 180; in the Romagna,
 184; returns to Siena, 187; received by the Emperor, 199;
 retires to Capriola, 201; preaches in Perugia, 209; made
 Vicar-general of the Observance, 213; in Florence, 218;
 preaches to the Greeks in Florence miraculously, 220; cor-
 rects a grave abuse in Milan, 222; wishes to resign the
 Vicariate, 228; visits Brescia, 240; appointed commissary
 by Albert of Sarziano, 243; pacifies the Chapter in Padua,

- 252; foretells his approaching death, 255, 275; goes to Vicenza, 256; takes leave of the friars of Capriola, 270; journeys painfully to Aquila, 276; death of, 279; appears to S. John Capistran, 311; translation of the body of, 325
- Bernardine, S., the ladies of, 81
- Bessarione, Cardinal, 310
- Bilio, Andrew, writes against the Saint, 149
- Biserj, de', Antony, 116
- Blood, flow of, from the body of the Saint, 289
- Bojardo, Peter, bishop of Ferrara, 172
- Bologna, the Saint visits, 122; gambling-houses in, 123; the Saint charged with heresy in, 192
- Bonello, John Pozzo, 300
- Bosnia, Manichees in, 35; Catherine, queen of, 325
- Bosso, Matthew, canon of S. John Lateran, 206, 257
- Bread, the miracle of, in Umbria, 145
- Brendolino, Poggio, 128
- Brescia, the Saint visits, 240
- Bustis, de', Ven. Bernardine, 163
- Calixtus III., Pope, 250
- Camponesco, Antony, 214
- Canimanis, de', Michael, provost of Pavia, 103
- Canon, a, becomes a novice under the Saint, 61
- Canonization of the Saint, opposed, 305; solemnities of the, 313
- Capistran, S. John, 80, 250; joins the Observantines, 137; goes to Rome to defend the Saint, 159; in the council of Florence, 219; made commissary, 229; testimony of, to the Saint's purity, 239; Vicar-general of the Observance, 277; goes to Aquila, 293; prophecy of, 298; promotes the canonization of the Saint, 306; witness of it, 312; proclaims the glory of the Saint, 319; reproves the people of Aquila, 322
- Capranica, da, Angelo, 309
- Capranica, di, Card. Dominic, 191
- Capriola, hermitage of, 48; monastery of, 49; the Saint preaches in, 53; residence of the Saint for a time, 231, 270
- Carpi, saved by the Saint's prayers, 184
- Carthusians, the, 105; brought to Venice by the Saint, 106
- Casale, of, William, 213, 242
- Casanova, di, John, Cardinal of S. Xystus, 194
- Casini, Card. Antony, 156, 194
- Caturnino, Peter, 270
- Celestine, S. Peter, appears to the Saint, 267
- Chalon, Philibert, sacrileges of, 328
- Charles, S., preached from a pulpit used by the Saint, 89
- Christopher of Monza, conversion of, 79; holy life of, 80
- Christopher, bishop of Rimini, 233
- Christophori, Angelo, cured by the Saint, 272
- Ciccolo, da, Pascal, cured by the merits of the Saint, 238
- Clusone visited by the Saint, 86
- Colombajo, convent of, 39
- Colombini, B. John, 19

- Como, disorderly state of, 87
 Compunction, spirit of, 70
 Condulmero, Francis, Cardinal bishop of Porto, 310
 Condulmero, Card. Gabriel, 122 ; gives good counsel to the Saint, 169. *See* Eugenius IV.
 Confraternity of the Madonna *degli Angeli*, 14
 Constance, council of, 63
 Conti, de', Prosdocimo, 256
 Conventuals, the, the Saint afraid of familiarity with, 252
 Conversation, a pure, 11, 13
 Cornaro, Card. Antony, 156
 Corpus Christi, monastery of, in Mantua, 93, 94
 ———, monastery of, in Ferrara, 95
 Corraro, Antony, bishop, 117
 Covella, Countess of Celano, 326
 Cremona, visited by the Saint, 93
 Croce, della, Francis, Canon of Milan, 300
 Croce, Santa, Cardinal Nicolas of, 233
 Dalismano, Br., of Padua, 242
 Death, sudden, of a Perugian nobleman, 143
 Debtors released by the Saint in Milan, 224
 Detachment of the Saint, 169
 Devils, the Perugini called, by the Saint, 140
 Diana, aunt of S. Bernardine, 3 ; educates the Saint, 4
 Donato, Christopher, 259
 Dorothy, of the Counts of Panego, 249
 Ducale, Civita, the Saint preaches in, 274
 Ecstasy, the Saint seen in, 178
 Education of S. Bernardine, 5
 Estouteville, di, William, Cardinal of Anjou, 297, 304
 Eugenius IV. offers a bishopric to the Saint, 172 ; protects the Saint against his traducers, 194, 302 ; crowns the Emperor Sigismund, 200 ; forced to fly from Rome, 203 ; sends for the Saint to Florence, 218 ; makes Brother Albert, of Sarziano, Vicar-general of the Minors, 242 ; authorizes the process of the Saint, 297 ; death of, 298
 Felice, Sister, 221
 Felix, Br., of Milan, 270
 Felix, V. Antipope, 222, 316
 Feltre, the Saint invited to, 116
 Ferrara, the Saint visits, 121, 212, 260 ; bishopric of, offered to the Saint, 172 ; conversion of a merchant of, 182
 Ferrer, S. Vincent, preaches in Italy, 54 ; foretells the greatness of the Saint, 55, 64, 74 ; thought Antichrist to be near at hand, 75 ; prophecy of, fulfilled, 312
 Ferryman, a, refuses to carry the Saint, 91
 Fiacherino, Thomas, 146
 Fiesole, convent of, 61
 Finicella, a sorceress, 164
 Florence, the Saint preaches in, 62, 126 : saved by the prayers of the Saint from the hands of the Milanese, 226

- Foligno visited by the Saint, 144, 271 ; nuns from, sent by the Saint to Viterbo, 147
- Fonte, del, Brother Julian Nusj, 214
- Fortebraccio, Nicolas, 233
- Foscari, Francis, Doge of Venice, 106, 246, 259
- Fountain of S. Bernardine, 33 ; of Apollo, 134
- Franceschina, Sister, of Guissano, 95
- Francis, S., third order of, 74
- Franciscans, the, rosary of, 216
- Gabriel, Br., a hermit, 107
- Gallerani, B. Andrew, 19
- Gambling, prevalence of, in Bologna, 122 ; suppression of, in Siena, 133 ; and in Perugia, 141 ; and in Rome, 164
- Gardone, the Saint visits, 241
- Genoa, visited by the Saint, 63
- Genutia, of Fossa Aquilana, 287
- Ghiandaroni, John of, 21 ; gives Capriola to the Saint, 48
- Ghibellines, 51, 66, 84, 117, 118
- Giles, Brother, 139
- Giunigi, Paul, tyrant of Lucca, 179 ; fall of, 180
- Giustiniano, Bernard, 258
- Godfathers, duties of, 247
- Gonzaga, Ferdinand, destroys a monastery for military reasons, 83
- Gonzaga, John Francis, Marquis of Mantua, 90
- Gonzaga, Br. Louis, 325
- Grassi, de', Peter, Bishop of Pavia, 102
- Grazie, delle, S. Maria, church of, 136
- Gritti, Andrea, Doge of Vicenza, 114
- Guarino, a famous master, 116
- Gubbio, the saint preaches in, 143, 144
- Guelphs, 51, 66, 84, 117, 118
- Guidantonio, Count of Montefeltro, 144
- Guidocci, Dominic, 270
- Healing, miraculous, of the Saint's throat, 50
- Heresy, charge of, brought against the Saint, 151, 191, 192
- Holy days, observance of, restored by the Saint, 72
- Honours paid to the Saint, 326
- Humility of the Saint, 174
- Illness of the Saint, 260 ; last, 278
- Incorruption of the Saint's body, 287
- Jews converted through the preaching of the Saint, 73, 165 ; familiarity with, condemned, 246
- John of Spoleto, master of the Saint, 10
- Joseph, Patriarch of Constantinople, 219
- Joseph, S., devotion of the Saint to, 248
- Julian, Card., of S. Angelo, 233
- Lady, our, devotion of the Saint to, 178, 217
- Lanceslaus, Br., 83
- Landis, de', Amadeus, a heretic, 300, 305 ; defames the Saint, 301 ; condemned by the Pope, 302

- Law, canon, studied by the Saint, 13
 Lazaretto, origin of the word, 107
 Leprosy, miraculous cure of, 267
 Liguria, the Saint preaches in, 75
 Loredano, James, 257, 259
 Lorenzi, Cosmo, miraculous healing of, 130
 Louis, Br., of Siena, 271
 Louis, S., 139
 Louis XI. gives a coffer of silver gilt to hold the body of the Saint, 327
 Lucca, the Saint visits, 179
 Luna, di, Peter, 75
 Malatesta, Paola, 90 ; founds a monastery in Mantua, 93, 94 ; and elsewhere, 98 ; helps to found a monastery in Verona, 112
 Manetti, de', Hildebrand, 27
 Manfred, Br., of Vercelli, errors of, 75 ; deludes the people, 89 ; attacks the Saint, 149 ; excesses of the followers of, 157
 Manners, corruption of, 51
 Mantua, the Saint preaches in, 91
 Marca, della, S. James, 185, 232 ; visited by the Saint, 270 ; visits Aquila after the Saint's death, 293, 323 ; chooses a site for a church in honour of the Saint, 324
 Marcello, Nicolas, 259
 Martin V., election of, 63 ; stay of, in Vercelli, 68 ; summons the Saint to Rome, 151 ; gave certain faculties to the Saint, 80 ; forbids alms to be given to the followers of Manfred, 90
 Mass said daily by the Saint before preaching, 70
 Massa, birthplace of S. Bernardine, 1 : unhealthy, 3 ; the Saint preaches in, 266 ; obtains the cloak of the Saint after his death, 291
 Mariani, Bartholomew, 270
 Mariscotti, S. Giacinta, 148
 Milan, the Saint goes to, 63 ; moved at the preaching of the Saint, 66 ; the Saint returns to, 79 ; a grave abuse in, 222
 —, James of, conversion of, 186
 Miracles, 137, 189, 190, 200, 204, 209, 267, 272, 274 ; ceasing of at the tomb of the Saint, 306
 "Misericordias Domini," 314
 Mitres, three, at the feet of the Saint, 333
 Mocenigo, Tommaso, Doge of Venice, 106
 Modena, the Saint preaches in, 283
 Montefranco, miracle of the bread in, 145
 Montorio, count of, 323
 Monza, the Saint preaches in, 79
 Moro, Christopher, 245, 259, 260 ; prophecy of the Saint to, 246
 Murderers, a custom of, 165
 Name, the Holy ; the Saint preaches, 62, 71, 87, 104, 107, 118, 125, 128, 129, 133, 148, 183, 190, 212, 247, 253, 259, 313 ; invocations of, 333

- Name, the Holy, feast of, 162
 Narniero, James, 274
 Nera, mother of S. Bernardine, 3
 Nereto, Peter, 146
 Nicolas V., election of, 299 ; protects the Saint, 302 : canonizes the Saint, 312
 Observantines, the, 73 ; in Venice, 108 ; Chapter of, in Aquila, 324
 Onofrio, master of the Saint, 9
 Onofrio, S., hermitage of, 48, 49
 Ordination of the Saint, 45
 Ostiglia, visited by the Saint, 93
 Padua, the Saint preaches in, 245 ; foundation of a monastery in, 249 ; Chapter of the order in, 251
 Palena, di, John, bishop of la Penna, 305
 Paleologus, John, the Emperor, 219
 Paola, sister, 96
 Passion, the, subject of the Saint's meditation, 42
 Patience of the Saint under persecution, 197
 Pavia, the Saint preaches in, 78 ; and founds a monastery in, 103
 Peace, the field of, 89
 Pecio, Bartholomew, 296
 Peneschino, a tiler, scoffs at the Saint, 200
 Persechino, Antony, 116
 Perugia, visited by the Saint, 139 ; corruption in, 140 ; conversion of, 141 ; the Saint preaches in, 209 ; visits, for the last time, 271 ; funeral solemnities of the Saint in, 291
 Pesche, della, Angeluccio, 170
 Peter, Br., of Travanda, 270
 Petronj, B. Peter, 19 ; body of, incorrupt, 99
 ———, Richard, Cardinal, founder of the Carthusians of Maggiano, 99
 Petrucci, John Antony, 273
 ———, Perna, miraculous cure of, 286
 Pia, aunt of the Saint, 8
 Piacenza visited by the Saint, 93
 Piccinino, Nicolas, 203, 225
 Piccolomini, Æneas Sylvius. *See* Pius II.
 Pietro, di, Martha, cure of, 143
 Piretto, Fra Antonio Angelo, 47
 Pisano, Louis, the Inquisitor, 193
 Pius II., birthplace of, 8 ; heard the Saint preach, 132
 Player, a strolling, story of, 210
 Poggio, a learned Florentine, 158
 Portiuncula, the, 138, 226
 Prato, the Saint visits, 129
 Prayer, a, of S. Bernardine, 25
 Prayer for each day, 253, 333
 Preaching of the Saint, 68, 178, 180
 Preaching, the Saint's instructions on, 206

- Prester, John, 312
 Prophecies of the Saint, 261
 Regotino, Philip, 7
 Ricasoli, de', Charles, 127
 Rieti, the Saint visits, 145, 272
 Ristori, John, 35 ; gives the habit of S. Francis to the Saint, 38 ; prophecies of, concerning the Saint, 38, 74
 Romagna, the, conversions in, 184
 Rome, the Saint summoned to, 151 ; revolt of, 203
 Rosary of the Franciscans, 216
 Rusca, Vincenzo, conversion of, 87
 Rusioni, de', Antony, elected general of the order, 252
 Salietti, de', Angelo, 100
 Sandrigo, visited by the Saint, 115
 Sargiano, the Saint preaches in, 46 ; monastery built in, 136
 Scala, the, hospital of, 19 ; the Saint enters the confraternity of, 20
 Scarampo, Henry, bishop of Belluno, 117
 Scarlino, da, Br. Thomas, death of, 307 ; miracles of, 308
 Schism, the great, evils of, 52
 Schools set up in his monasteries by the Saint, 228
 Scriptures, the, studied by the Saint, 13
 Sforza, Francis, 203
 Siena, S. Bernardine removed to, 8 ; made an archbishopric, desolated by pestilence, 21 ; the Saint consulted in, 44 ; the Saint preaches his second sermon in, 48 ; invited to, by the magistrates, 131 ; bishopric of, declined by the Saint, 168 ; defends the Saint's orthodoxy, 194 ; the Saint preaches in, 203, 269 ; canonization of the Saint desired by, 296 ; rejoicings in, when the canonization was made, 315
 Sigismund, the Emperor, 199
 Sile, the river, miracle of S. John Capistran at, 319
 Silvestro, S., hamlet of, 277
 Sinners converted by the Saint, 72
 Sixtus IV. orders the translation of the body of the Saint, 325
 Sororio, blessed, 19
 Spoleto, the Saint preaches in, 143, 272
 Star, a, seen over the Saint's head while preaching, 215 ; after the Saint's death, when S. John Capistran was preaching, 294
 Taranto, John, Cardinal of, 304, 310
 Tavelli, John, the Blessed, of Tossignano, 172
 Thomas, Br., of Florence, 227
 Tobia, a cousin of the Saint, 14, 238 ; anxieties of, 15 ; nurses the plague-struck in the hospital, 22 ; nurses the Saint in his illness, 27 ; the Saint reviled by a relative in the house of, 43 ; death of, revealed to the Saint while preaching in Milan, 65
 Tollo, Father of S. Bernardine, 3 ; alarmed by the Saint's jesting, 15 ; watches him, 16
 Tolomei, B. Bernard, 19

- Tomasi, Peter, a Venetian doctor, 260, 266
 Tongues, gift of, 220
 Translation of the body of the Saint, 325
 Treviglio visited by the Saint, 88
 Treviso visited by the Saint, 115 ; church and convent of, 116
 Urbino, see of, declined by the Saint, 172 ; bishop of, 304
 Usurer, death of a, 209
 Valerio, a card painter, 124
 Valiero, Francis, 259
 Venice, 103 ; queen of the sea, 104
 Veniero, Dolfino, 117, 119
 Verona visited by the Saint, 110, 257 ; monastery of Poor
 Clares, founded in, 112
 Vicenza, the Saint visits, 113, 257
 Vignozzi, Paul, Br., 139, 212
 Vincent, Br., of Siena, 76, 173 ; holy death of, 264
 Vincenti, Francis, 19
 Visconti, Philip Mary, 65 ; gives a church for a monastery to
 the Saint, 102 ; rebels against the Pope, 203 ; lays a snare
 for the Saint, 223 ; recalls the Saint to Milan, 244
 Vision, a, of our Lady, 108
 Viterbo, the Saint visits, 147
 Vito, di Santo, Antony, 304
 Vitturi, Matthew, 245 ; 259
 Vodadeo, John, a heretic, 63
 Volterra, the Saint preaches in, 128 ; church built in, in
 honour of the Holy Name, 129
 Wading, Luke, 195
 Women, conversation of, avoided by the Saint, 238
 Writings of the Saint, examined in Rome, 156
 Youth, a desolate, of Siena, 188
 Zana, Mark, 259

THE END.

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